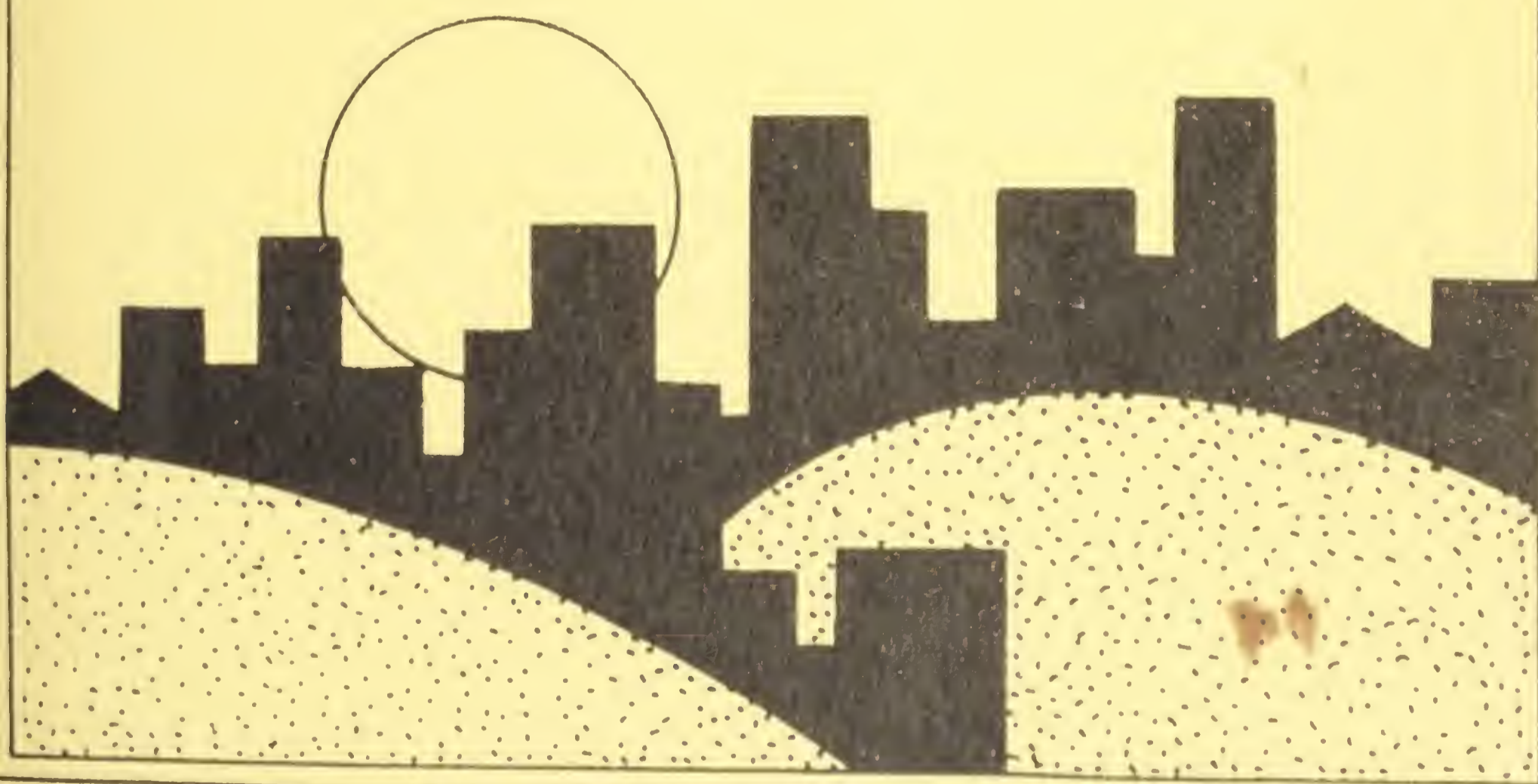


A History of Australian Capital City Centres Since 1945

Susan Marsden

Urban Research Program
Working Paper No.61
October 1997



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RESEARCH SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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Introduction

Which historical changes are imprinted in the contemporary Australian city centre? This question has real meaning when we try to determine which places reflecting superseded historical processes should be preserved. Since World War II the pressures of redevelopment and modernisation on city centres have accelerated and expanded. These pressures are focused most intensely in Australia on the State capitals. As a result, much of the built and cultural heritage of the capital city centre has been obliterated, not only uses dating from before the war but also the post-war structures which replaced them.

Since the 1950s architects, planners and historians have identified significant buildings and structures dating from colonial times and many places have been heritage-listed by Commonwealth, State or local government. But few of these places date from later than the 1920s and fewer still from after 1945. This lack of recognition adds to the threat presented by intensive redevelopment, especially as many of the significant post-war buildings are privately-owned and located on expensive central sites. Their primary purpose is to continue to earn profit from the sale or lease of floor space. For the same reason, attempts to prevent the replacement or drastic remodelling of these buildings has often been vehemently opposed by owners and developers. They have also questioned the stated historical significance of the buildings as each is treated as an isolated case. Some comparisons have been possible due to heritage professionals' knowledge of similar buildings in the same city but no architectural or historical context for the buildings of the post-war city centre in Australia overall was available. '[F]or all the importance of these city centers in Australian life and for all the complexity of their present problems, the Australian CBD has so far been the subject of but scanty geographical investigation.'¹ Historical investigation is equally scarce.

In response to this problem, the Australian Heritage Commission commissioned a report on post-war multi-storied office buildings² and in 1996 included in its priorities for the National Estates Grants Program, 'Historical analysis, identification and assessment of the main themes associated with post World War II CBD development in Australia'. The purpose of this project was to prepare a contextual history of post-war central business district development and to establish a thematic framework to assist heritage researchers in identifying places of significance. I completed that study in early 1997.³ This working paper is based on the contextual histories which form a major part of that report.⁴

¹ P Scott, 'The Australian CBD', *Economic Geography* v 35, no 4 Oct 1959, p 290.

² J Taylor (with S Stewart), 'Post World War Two multistoried office buildings in Australia (1945-1967)' (Report prepared for the Australian Heritage Commission), University of Sydney 1994.

³ S Marsden, 'Historical identification and assessment of main themes associated with the development of Australia's capital city centres since World War Two' (NEGP report to the Australian Heritage Commission), Urban Research Program, ANU, February 1997

⁴ It has also benefited from the comments of the reviewers of the draft working paper.

The working paper is divided into two main parts. *Historical development of Australia's capital city centres* provides a brief overview setting the city centre in its historical context. This section considers the whole city not just the centre, but also refers to developments which have shaped and are still evident in city centres. It should also be noted that the cities and their centres were one and the same to begin with and that the centre retained most of the urban population and services for many years, in Darwin's case until well after World War II. *City centres since World War II* comprises the longest section of the paper. This discusses the post-war city centre in terms of major historical themes chosen from the thematic framework developed in the heritage report.⁵ These headings are arranged so that the first themes in each thematic section are the most general and set the context for those following.

The cities considered are the State capitals: Adelaide, Brisbane, Darwin, Hobart, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. Darwin has been capital of the Northern Territory since self-government in 1978, and in practice capital since 1869 although formally administered from Adelaide and Canberra. Canberra is both the seat of federal government and the Australian Capital Territory's 'capital', so there has been less opportunity than in distant Darwin for the growth of independent administrative functions housed in close proximity in a city centre. Also, Canberra was designed as a city *without* a city centre (except for parliament house) although a CBD has been attempted in the past 20 years. For these reasons this paper excludes the national capital.

The term 'city centre' is used in preference to 'central business district' (CBD) except when the business precinct *within* the city centre is referred to. The city centre is a concentration of non-residential activities in one small area, and displays a distinct contrast to suburbia. It is, in Lefebvre's words 'the place of the unexpected', and, as Harvey suggests, 'out of that all manner of possibilities can flow'.⁶ 'Central Business District' is too limiting a term for a place so crowded with possibilities. CBD was a term coined by North American researchers and reflected the greater functional specialisation of big American cities around 1940 than their counterparts in other countries. Since World War II business has become the dominating concern of large city centres. Yet the 'core' of the Australian city is still not given over to business and commerce alone. In 1964 Borrie's plan for central Melbourne defined its function as 'to provide a central place for the exchange of

whom I thank.

5 These themes are based on the Australian Heritage Commission's draft Principal Australian Historic Themes Framework and, an objective of the city centre study, were refined and adapted as the contextual histories were prepared. This thematic approach has some limitations as it downplays the many factors at play and their interaction in shaping the city centre and its structures; and it limits discussion of changing functions and succession and change in the city centres. I have structured the first part of this working paper with those concerns in mind, but to reduce the length of the paper, I have reduced the span of the contextual histories provided in the report and have omitted several themes. The omitted themes are: *manufacturing; entertainment for profit and tourism; urban services, officials, politicians and interest groups; responding to urban and natural environments; social services; city activism and organisations; and worship and commemoration.*

6 D Harvey, *The urbanization of capital: studies in the history and theory of capitalist urbanization*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland 1985, p 225.

goods, services and ideas, and for public and business administration'.⁷ Even this concise definition expands the functions of the centre and implies livelier and more profound cultural exchanges than those involved in simply buying and selling.

The city centre also includes the 'frame', a transition zone of mixed-use between the vertical scale and intensive uses of the core and the horizontal and homogeneous residential or industrial inner suburbs. Examining activities in core-and-frame is Alexander's approach in the only Australian book which deals squarely with city centres.⁸ This approach takes into account the shifting nature of centre boundaries as land-and-capital-intensive uses such as office towers invade low-rent and land-extensive uses such as cottages and warehouses. There are strong linkages between the two districts; both are characterised by mixed-use, and use land more intensively than elsewhere in the metropolitan area, and activities in both districts serve city and State as a whole. The 'frame' also provides low-cost accommodation for the poor, and those people who need or serve the centre, an important function threatened by other central functions, such as freeways and warehousing, and more recently, by 'gentrification'.⁹

The paper takes into account the shifting nature of the city centre by adopting a loose definition of its boundaries. In part, these are based on city council boundaries but some boundaries have changed in the 50 year period under consideration and some city councils include substantial suburban areas. Brisbane and Darwin Councils are responsible for the whole metropolitan area. Nevertheless, one of the main types of urban council in Australia is the central council district whose boundaries contain most of the functions of the city centre. Boundaries are also delimited through geography and morphology, by lines of communication and physical barriers. Adelaide lies within its original framework of Park Lands; Brisbane is in a loop of the Brisbane River with central station and rising ground marking the northern edge; Perth is contained by the Swan River on south and east, Mount Eliza to the west, with business concentrated south of the railway; Sydney is contained by the harbour, parks and Central Station. Darwin is built on a peninsula with an airport separating the centre from post-war suburbs. Melbourne is bounded by gardens, parliament and government buildings and railway stations. This paper also includes 'south bank' arts and entertainment complexes in Brisbane and Melbourne.¹⁰

Historical development of Australia's capital city centres

Unlike those other transcontinental examples of European expansion, the United States and the Russian Empire, Australia does not present the picture of a rolling frontier moving ever outwards towards the distant Pacific. The Australian interior was too arid.

⁷ EF Borrie, Report on a planning scheme for the Central Business Area of the City of Melbourne [City of Melbourne] 1964, p 15.

⁸ I Alexander, *The city centre*, University of Western Australia, Nedlands 1974.

⁹ See also C Forster, *Australian cities: continuity and change*, OUP, Oxford 1995, p 99.

¹⁰ For a fuller discussion of these terms and parameters see S Marsden, 'The development of Australia's capital city centres since World War Two: identifying the main themes', *Australia ICOMOS Conference papers*, Australia ICOMOS, Melbourne 1996.

Instead, Australia began with an archipelago of isolated settlements along a sprawling coast. Sydney in 1788, Hobart and Launceston in 1803-04, Brisbane, Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide between 1824 and 1836...can be seen each as the nucleus of a separate impulse of settlement from which colonization would spread out.¹¹

Both historical and geographical influences are implicit in Australia's urban system. In summary, the main geographical influences on the development of the Australian capital cities overall have been distance and the resources of each city's hinterland. The shape and character of the city centres have also been influenced by the physical features of their original sites. The main historical influences relate to the international context in which the cities were founded and in succeeding years; the persisting and changing functions of the city centres; the relationships between the capital cities, and local influences. The built heritage of the city centres illustrates responses to the physical attributes of their sites and both persisting and changing activities through time during which urban places were retained, remade or replaced.

Geographical influences

The map of Australia reveals some defining characteristics of its capital cities. The most important is distance. Australia is located on the far side of the world, 16 000 kilometres, from Britain, the original coloniser and investor and principal source of settlers. Within Australia the State capitals are located at widely separated sites along the coastline. Despite 200 years of immigration the population of this big country is small yet most of the capital cities are of a size comparable with large cities in more densely populated countries. This reflects a long process of uneven urban growth and the differing economic opportunities for development in each colony/State.

Each capital was developed in advance of the exploitation of the surrounding countryside and well ahead of formal occupation of the interior. The Australian capitals shared these characteristics with other new world cities, especially those founded during 'a surge in nineteenth century urbanisation which ringed the Pacific with a network of bustling commercial cities: Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Auckland, San Francisco, Seattle and Vancouver'. All of these cities grew as gateways to extensive hinterlands.¹²

Major differences between the Australian capitals have developed as a result of the relationship between the cities and their hinterlands, a relationship strengthened by the distances between all towns and cities. The topography, which is mostly flat on the mainland, made it relatively easy for each capital city to establish and extend its dominance to the far boundaries of its own colony. As McCarty has argued, the size and rate of growth of each capital was a function of the wealth of its hinterland and of its ability to dominate the colony's transport, business and government

¹¹ G Bolton, 'The civil war we never had', Proceedings of The Samuel Griffith Society, 1994, v 3, chapter 5 ([http://www.exhibit.com.au/~griffith/v3cont.htm#Chapter Five](http://www.exhibit.com.au/~griffith/v3cont.htm#Chapter%20Five)).

¹² (Including preceding quotations) M Lewis, *Melbourne: the city's history and development*, 2nd ed, City of Melbourne, 1995, p 8.

against rival cities within and outside the region.¹³ Sydney and Melbourne became (and remain) Australia's biggest cities as they 'had large, productive hinterlands in which there were no important urban rivals, but each city competed against the other in urban industries such as manufacturing and shipping...'¹⁴ Adelaide and Perth also had no regional rivals and vast but arid hinterlands.

Brisbane had a large but sparse hinterland which it had to share with other coastal towns and Hobart shared a 'stagnant hinterland' with Launceston. Queensland and Tasmania share similar regional patterns, in part because of geography: Brisbane is at the southern end of an immensely long coastline; and Tasmania's rugged topography isolated one district from the next and fostered the rise of rival towns. Launceston's growth was also fostered by proximity to Melbourne, across Bass Strait.

Four attempts to establish settlements on Australia's northern coast failed due largely to distance from the southern colonies, and the fifth settlement, Palmerston (later named Darwin) barely survived in a region presenting not so much opportunity as 'a severe challenge to European-based civilisation'.¹⁵ The distances separating Darwin, Hobart and Perth from the most-populous south-eastern cities (Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney) retarded their development but distance also protected local business in most capitals from competition in the nineteenth century. Several capitals also benefited from exploiting regional mineral discoveries - copper in South Australia in the 1840s, and gold in NSW (and Victoria) in the 1850s, in the NT and Queensland in the 1870s and 1880s, and in WA in the 1890s. These opportunities fostered the development of more complex city centres in the smaller capitals than might otherwise have been the case.

Common geographical criteria were used in determining each capital city site - a coastal location near deep anchorage, fresh water, moderate elevation, good soils and building materials.¹⁶ Yet these same criteria were satisfied by very different physical features. One defining characteristic of each city centre is the difference in types of local stone used in the surviving colonial buildings, for example, Sydney's triassic sandstone and Adelaide's limestone and sedimentary bluestone. Environmental differences also contribute strongly to the different public images of each city and its natural features have also greatly influenced the shape and form of each centre's development.¹⁷ More than any other city, physical geography has determined Sydney's urban form and defines its beauty, with the centre surrounded on three sides by Sydney Cove and Darling Harbour. Central Darwin is also defined by the sea, surrounding its peninsula site.

¹³ JW McCarty, 'Australian capital cities in the nineteenth century', in JW McCarty and CB Schedvin, *Australian capital cities*, Sydney University Press, Sydney 1978, p 20.

¹⁴ McCarty, pp 20-21.

¹⁵ A Powell, quoted in D Carment, *Looking at Darwin's past*, Northern Australia Research Unit, ANU Darwin 1996, p1.

¹⁶ P Statham, 'Patterns and perspectives', in P Statham, ed, *The origins of Australia's capital cities*, CUP, Cambridge 1989, pp 12-13.

¹⁷ See also M Neutze, *Urban development in Australia*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1977, 1981, pp 16-19.

The other capitals are defined mainly in relation to the river which was the rationale for first settlement, and by lands held in public ownership since colonial times. Hobart lies between the Derwent River and Mount Wellington which confined the city centre to a strip of land running from south to north. In Brisbane habitation on the north bank - now the city centre - was confined on three sides by a meander of the Brisbane River.¹⁸ Central Perth was contained by a great bend in the Swan River, swamps and Mt Eliza. Melbourne was defined by the Yarra River, Eastern Hill and Batman's Swamp. Melbourne's site - now the city centre - was determined by a reef in the Yarra which marked the upper limit of shipping.¹⁹ South Australia's River Torrens is a modest stream but is given prominence by William Light's plan for Adelaide which divided the city into two sectors straddling the river valley, with the whole city surrounded by parkland.²⁰

There are wide differences between cities in climate, landscape and local resources due to the size of the continent they occupy. Darwin, the northern-most capital is situated only 12° south of the equator, close to Indonesia, while the most southerly city, Hobart, lies at 42° with Antarctica as the nearest landmass to the south. The cities are not differentiated to the degree one might expect with such wide divergences in latitude, due to their common British origins, federation and the other homogenising influences of the twentieth century.

Historical influences

Every city expresses a fundamental cultural homogeneity deriving from British occupation and influences. Their similarities also reflect the period in which they were founded. All except Darwin were established within 50 years. All were founded within the 'modern' age, as part of the expanding British Empire, and in a context of industrial revolution, mass-emigration and the global spread of capitalism. The influence of overseas investment and emigration, in combination with local factors, also created a pattern of urban development typified by cycles of boom and bust.²¹

The influence of the first settlement (Sydney, 1788) and Britain's designation of the whole of eastern Australia as the first colony of NSW, is reflected in the concentration of other capitals in the east. Hobart (1804), Brisbane (1825) and Melbourne (1835) were once 'out-stations' of Sydney. Distance from 'convict' Sydney partly explains the choice of sites in western and central-southern Australia by the free colonists who founded Perth (1829) and Adelaide (1836). Darwin (1869) administered Adelaide's 'northern territory'.

18 A Smith, 'Woolloongabba transported: its changing face', R Fisher and B Shaw, eds, *Brisbane: people, places and progress*, Brisbane History Group, Brisbane 1995, pp 83-84.

19 Lewis, p 12.

20 S Marsden, P Stark and P Sumerling, *Heritage of the city of Adelaide*, Adelaide City Council 1990, pp 17, 22.

21 MT Daly, 'Finance, the capital market and Sydney's development', in RV Cardew, JV Langdale and DC Rich, eds, *Why cities change: urban development and economic change in Sydney*, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1982, p 53.

As the first settlement, Sydney coped with the harshest effects of remoteness and its first 20 years were a struggle for survival.²² There was also struggle involved in transforming Sydney from its founding purpose as a convict camp to a town with a more complex range of social groups and functions. There was a similar slow transition in Hobart and Brisbane. 'Once the penal settlement and subsequent colonial development of New South Wales seemed assured, all kinds of strategic and commercial considerations intervened'.²³ Hence, the main motive for the establishment of Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide was commerce: these were "pure" products of the nineteenth century expansion of capitalism'.²⁴

By the mid-nineteenth century British investors viewed the Australian colonies more favourably than any other colonies, above all because they were 'conspicuously successful at producing valuable staple products at competitive prices and under term of the new British policy of international free trade'.²⁵ Each of the colonial capitals became primarily commercial capitalist cities with their main functional role one of facilitating international trade in export staples such as whale oil, wool, wheat and gold. 'High profits attracted large amounts of capital and relatively lesser amounts of labour from Britain so as to sustain a fast rate of growth and, indirectly, the rapid growth of capital cities'. This growth was manifest in the transformation of several city centres - timber and thatch replaced with more massive and taller stone buildings - from the late 1850s until the 1880s.

With population, markets and labour concentrated in the colonial capitals they were also able to attract much of the industrial development which took off towards the end of the nineteenth century. Sydney and Melbourne, as the largest cities, benefited the most from industrialisation, and this was reflected in the concentration of industrial areas in the inner ring of suburbs around the city centres and in the greater wealth of central businesses. In all capitals, however, during the twentieth century their 'entrepot functions have declined in importance...as their growth has become tied to the expansion of manufacturing and service industries producing for the growing domestic market.'²⁶ Huge growth in the service/tertiary sector underpinned the rebuilding of sections of the city centres with high-rise business and administrative offices and cultural complexes after World War II.

However, there were important differences in location and size of these expanding precincts, in part reflecting the original morphology of the city centres. Siksna has discussed the long-term effects of the different block and layout patterns of each capital city.²⁷ A major difference between the convict and the free

22 For example, see G Aplin, SG Foster and M McKernan, eds *Australians: events and places*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, Broadway NSW 1987, p 272.

23 JJ Auchmuty, '1810-30', in F Crowley, ed, *A new history of Australia*, Heinemann, Melbourne 1974, p 48. Historians still debate whether, or how much, the latter considerations played a part in Britain's founding of the convict settlement of Sydney.

24 McCarty, pp 11-12, 13 .

25 CD Goodwin, 'British economists and Australian gold', in *Journal of Economic History*, v XXX, June 1970, no 2, p 417.

26 DT Merrett, 'Australian capital cities in the twentieth century', in McCarty and Schedvin, p 179.

27 A Siksna, 'The evolution of block size and form in Australian central business

settler towns was expressed in their plans. Scant concern with future urban expansion was shown in the selection of sites for convict Sydney, Hobart and Brisbane, and limited plans were adopted only after the towns began to develop. Their city centres (which occupy the original town sites) are cramped, with narrow streets and small public spaces. Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth were placed in the tradition of free settler frontier towns in North America with new world plans which were vast grids. These were far larger than necessary but based on expectations that the town would grow into a city and all the delineated spaces would eventually be filled.²⁸

Each Australian city centre stands on the original city site and is defined by the morphology established by the first surveyors, the location of the port and the colonial pattern of streets, plots and public spaces. Between 1810-1821 the NSW governor Lachlan Macquarie had a pronounced impact on Sydney and Hobart due to his decisions on the siting of new public buildings and Hobart's first town plan.²⁹ Melbourne's present city centre was laid down in 1837 as a rectangular street pattern along the River Yarra. Adelaide, Perth and Darwin were also planned as grids. Each city centre was also defined in relation to its region by a radial network of roads, rails and telegraph lines. This radial design helped to concentrate business, cultural institutions and public administration in each city centre and meant that the largest and most prominent public transport buildings and structures were located in the centre. The replacement of these structures with commercial and cultural complexes is only a very recent phenomenon and many sites have persisted in their nineteenth century uses.

The size of the country and its remoteness made shipping links crucial, particularly as the trading function of the city centres expanded. Each State capital is a maritime city. Canberra, the federal capital and the only inland capital, was the exception that proves the rule as it was established for political rather than mercantile purposes and at a much later date than the other cities when shipping was no longer of such importance in communications. The port as a major function has strongly influenced each city's character and the economic development of its centre but from the perspective of tangible heritage there were significant differences between cities stemming from the precise location of the port. The cities may be divided into three groups: where the centre is also a port (Sydney, Darwin and Hobart); where the centre was formerly a port, which has been moved downstream but has left a legacy of structures and uses (Melbourne and Brisbane) and where the centre was never a port which was built at some distance away (Perth and Adelaide).

Sydney Cove and Hobart's Sullivan Cove in the Derwent River are magnificent deep-water harbours, alongside ground suitable for town-building, while in SA the best place for Port Adelaide was at a shallow river outlet surrounded by a swamp which was of no use as the site for a city. This difference also reflected the

districts', Urban history/Planning history conference paper, ANU, Canberra 1995.

28 D Hamer, *New towns in the new world. Images and perceptions of the nineteenth-century urban frontier*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1990, p 178.

29 L Scripps, *Central Hobart: a thematic history*, printed report, Hobart Central Area Strategy Plan, topic paper, appendix 1, Hobart City Council, 1991, pp 1-3.

founders' ambitions for Adelaide, which were grander than for the older penal settlements. Sydney and Hobart were established by seafaring men who placed 'their straggle of streets close alongside deep water', so that city and port were one entity. There are still wharves for ocean-going ships at the end of George Street in Sydney and Elizabeth Street in Hobart although the operations of Sydney and Hobart as ports have changed dramatically in the past 20 years.

By contrast to the other capitals, 'Perth and Adelaide were settled by systematic colonists, who surveyed a gracious grid of city streets well away from the riffraff of the port.'³⁰ Perth is 16 kilometres from Fremantle, its port at the mouth of the Swan River. The separation of city and port in Adelaide and Perth has also meant that both city centres remain close to the geographical centre of their expanding metropolitan areas. Darwin combines characteristics of the first and second groups. It was founded by SA colonists but on a more modest and realistic scale than Adelaide, as a small grid adjacent to the best harbour along the NT coast. Central Darwin, like Sydney and Hobart, still operates as a port.

Melbourne and Brisbane were intermediate cases. Each lay beside a navigable river, but as the size of ships increased the port moved downstream. As the Yarra is smaller than the Brisbane River, this change occurred first in Melbourne, beginning as early as the 1850s, although shipping began to move downstream in earnest from the original centre in Melbourne after Victoria Dock was opened in 1892.³¹ The down-river movement of the Brisbane's port did not assume importance until the twentieth century and was not completed until after World War II: the replacement of old port structures in central Brisbane is still occurring. Melbourne city centre's early role as a port had effects which are also evident.³² The intersection of Collins Street and Queen Street, which once overlooked Queen's Wharf from the 'town', has remained the centre of financial Melbourne.³³

The capital city centre's port function is an example of an important changing function whereas its function as the centre of public administration has persisted. In the modern world generally, colonial systems have facilitated the growth of primate cities by centralising administration in them and focusing transport and communications links upon them to make regions easier to administer. Colonial economies promoted export-oriented primary production which also fostered urban primacy rather than the development of a range of large cities within a colony.³⁴ The Australian capitals soon developed complex administrative, as well as cultural and economic functions. In effect, each colony was an independent city-state which soon developed its own strong sense of identity. Hobart, Brisbane and

³⁰ This and the following paragraph, including quotations, are mainly based on I Manning, *The open street: public transport, motor cars and politics in Australian cities*, Transit Australia Publishing, Sydney, 1991, p 11.

³¹ G Davison, ed, *Melbourne on foot*, Rigby, Adelaide 1980, chapter by Davison, p 22.

³² This point was given emphasis by several of the informants I consulted in Melbourne.

³³ Davison, p 32.

³⁴ AS Linsky, 'Some generalizations concerning primate cities', in G Breese, ed, *The city in newly developing countries: readings on urbanism and urbanization*, Prentice-Hall, London, 1972, pp 285, 287-288, 291-292.

Darwin which did not become capitals until some years after founding, had a slower start than the other cities.

Self-government was proclaimed in all colonies during the 1850s, except for WA (1890). Melbourne, Hobart and Brisbane joined the other cities as colonial capitals. With self-government each founding port city became 'the mini-metropolis for a separate colony'³⁵ and in many respects remained so when the colonies became States with federation in 1901. This capital city function is one of the most important themes and contrasts with the urban history of even quite similar countries such as New Zealand, as government committed resources to the Australian capitals which 'gave those towns a flying start' and made it almost impossible for other towns to challenge their dominance.³⁶

Colonial/state government was highly centralised, with government house, parliament and departmental offices situated in the centres. Although government has changed since the nineteenth century, its specific locations within city centres and many of its early buildings have been retained. Centralisation of administration and business also made the capital cities the leading cultural centres, and the city-state character of colonial government ensured that each capital gained its own 'national' galleries, libraries, universities and museums. These and other cultural institutions and associations have remained highly centralised functions with the majority of structures located in and near the city centres.

By the late nineteenth century the Australian population was not only one of the most highly urbanised in the world but it was also concentrated into the six capitals. This metropolitan primacy has persisted, especially in Victoria, SA and WA. In each Australian city the public sector often initiated, and has remained crucial to private sector investment. The urban roles of present Australian governments are clearly descended from the roles of colonial governments which provided public investment in infrastructure such as transport.³⁷ Butlin's work in this area demonstrates how much of the total Australian investment went into urban infrastructure, particularly in the late nineteenth century.³⁸ Social welfare and cultural activities were also supported by governments. Thus the capital cities were built by a partnership of public and private enterprise with government providing essential services, and also, through convict assignment and assisted immigration, both labour and consumers.

Colonial governments soon recognised the advantage of moving some of the costs of building the cities to local government. Between 1842-1859 councils were established in every capital city and soon had a discernible impact on the centres. A primary phase of installing infrastructure - roads, bridges, squares, markets, council premises - was followed by a secondary phase of city improvement and regulation -

35 Bolton.

36 D Hamer, 'The making of urban New Zealand', *Journal of urban history*, 22, 1, November 1995, p 6.

37 A Parkin, *Governing the cities: the Australian experience in perspective*, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1984, p 64.

38 NG Butlin, *Investment in Australian economic development 1861-1900*, CUP, Cambridge, 1964.

health inspections, building controls, tree planting and gardens - then a tertiary phase of 'social engineering', with comprehensive city planning and the subsidy of welfare schemes.³⁹ Only in Brisbane was the multiplicity of later suburban councils merged into one with the creation in 1925 of the Greater Brisbane Council. This also differentiated Brisbane from the other cities because the council was responsible for city-wide functions which were assumed by State government elsewhere.⁴⁰ In fact, no sooner had city councils been established in Australia than government began to create separate departments and statutory boards such as harbour trusts with important city functions.⁴¹

There was no contest between local and State authorities in Darwin. Darwin council, set up in 1874, wrestled with a diminishing rate base and was abolished at its own request in 1937.⁴² Despite recurring efforts by colonial and Commonwealth authorities to stimulate private development Darwin was the city most dependent on the public sector. The NT was part of SA from 1863 and administered from Darwin from 1869. But SA lost rather than made money in the NT and relinquished it to the Commonwealth in 1911. The colonies retained their capitals when they became States upon federation in 1901. Commonwealth parliament and most departments were located in Melbourne until parliament house was opened in Canberra in 1927, but the transfer of big departments was not completed until the 1960s. The Commonwealth presence reinforced Melbourne's pre-eminence as Australia's financial centre.

All of the cities were marked by economic growth cycles, booms and busts, and in each boom, as land prices rose in the business sectors of the central city, 'obsolete' structures, - houses, workshops and open yards, and buildings of small scale and primitive building materials - were replaced by new commercial and administrative offices and warehouses. The 1850s goldrush boosted Melbourne's growth and also that of Sydney, Hobart, and Adelaide through the sudden increase in settlers generally and expanded trade opportunities. The 1880s-1890s was a decade of great expansion in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane as investment funds rushed in from Britain, imposing buildings were constructed and speculation reached fever pitch. Local factors worsened international depressions in the 1890s and 1930s. After the 1890s Sydney regained its lead as the largest city. Sydney reached one million in the early 1920s and Melbourne by the end of the 1920s. The other cities, in order of size, Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth, Hobart and Darwin, were much smaller. Brisbane overtook Adelaide as the third largest city in the early 1940s.

39 P Morton, 'A history of Adelaide and its council 1878-1928', Typescript, City of Adelaide, 1991, pp 6-7. (Published in 1996.)

40 M Bowman, *Local government in the Australian states*, AGPS, Canberra 1976, pp 55-56. A detailed history of Brisbane Council is provided in JR Cole, *Shaping a city: Greater Brisbane 1925-1985*, William Brooks, Eagle Farm 1984.

41 D Dunstan, *Governing the metropolis*, MUP, Carlton, 1984, discusses why one of those colonial governments (Victoria) had to resort to statutory bodies.

42 H Wilson, 'Historical overview', in A Welke and H Wilson, 'Darwin central area heritage study', Report to Northern Territory Conservation Commission through National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory), Darwin 1993, p xi.

From the late nineteenth century the most evident impact of population growth was in the suburbs, not the city centres. The numbers of suburban residents remained small until the influx of immigrants in the 1850s.⁴³ However, these new suburbs still clustered 'to the skirts of a recognisable central business district'⁴⁴ as most jobs were located in the city and most residents walked to work. From the 1890s beginning with Sydney and Melbourne, a more clearly defined central business district became evident.

The shift in population from the city's 'walking zone' to more distant suburbs was made possible when trains and trams were introduced. Most systems were complete by the mid-1890s and suburbs were constructed along radial rail and tram lines. By the 1950s, a century of suburban development had shifted residents and factories from the centres, although the population of inner areas had not steeply declined, as immigrants replaced those who moved. Also, far from reducing central business activity the growth in suburbs had helped to increase central commercial, cultural and administrative activities. What further changes would mass use of cars and accelerated metropolitan growth bring to the city centres after the war?

The city centres since World War II

1. Constructing capital city economies

1.1 Economic cycles

The economic history of city centres since World War II may be divided into two broad periods. The long economic boom from the 1950s until the early 1970s is labelled in a history of entrepreneurship as 'years of plenty, profit and industrialists', and the following period as a 'roller coaster ride' and a time of 'new directions and expanding horizons'.⁴⁵ Within these broad phases short cycles of boom and bust also left their marks on city centre architecture. Between 1940 and 1970 the Commonwealth government was one of many which subscribed to Keynesian economic theory. Import restrictions and tariffs were used to protect manufacturing industries and investment was concentrated in industries such as clothing, consumer goods and cars which catered mainly for the Australian market and were competitive as long as levels of government support remained high. During the late 1950s and 1960s the economy experienced rapid growth. The expansion of manufacturing, coupled with immigration schemes which supplied both workers and consumers, was a major factor in the boom, mainly benefiting Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide. Adelaide's basic role, like that of Hobart, was as a port city for agricultural exports but Adelaide's early post-war boom derived from the manufacturing which expanded between the 1930s and the 1970s within the context of federal protectionism and with State government encouragement.⁴⁶ The

⁴³ Davison, *Melbourne on foot*, p 58.

⁴⁴ M Kelly, 'Nineteenth century Sydney', in J Davidson, ed, *The Sydney-Melbourne book*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney 1986, p 44.

⁴⁵ M Hartwell and J Lane, *Champions of enterprise: Australian entrepreneurship 1788-1990*, Focus Books, NSW 1991, Table of contents.

⁴⁶ Many writers have discussed Adelaide's industrialisation under the Liberal-County League governments of the period, most recently, DC Rich, in 'Tom's vision? Playford

biggest gains in each city were made in car and appliance manufacturing which expanded with the boom in consumer spending after the war, which also boosted city centre business.

Manufacturing was less important in the other capitals and most of it served their own regions. Economic boom in Perth, Brisbane and Darwin followed in the 1960s when advances in transport and communications technology made the exploitation of remote mineral resources feasible. Overseas funds were drawn in to mining in the NT, Queensland and WA, setting off huge mining booms in the 1960s. In the 1980s resource-based development - mainly in WA, central Queensland and NSW - tripped off another round of intensive office building in the city centres. This was offset by the loss of factory jobs in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney and in other capitals than Sydney by an increasing concentration of international and national business in that city.⁴⁷

South Australian factories produced consumer goods for sale in the main markets of Sydney and Melbourne and from the 1970s Adelaide's economy faltered with downturns in consumer spending and the removal of manufacturers to Melbourne and Sydney. Concurrently, the international restructuring of industry had widespread effects on Australian cities. From 1972-73 capital city economies were also disturbed by the first oil crisis and the onset of national and international stagflation and recession: 1974-75 was a bad year for the property market in many countries, with high interest rates, scarce mortgage money, a fuel crisis, and an over-supply of offices.⁴⁸

The realignment of the economy in a global context since the early 1970s and especially since the mid-1980s has had particular impact on the capital cities. Tariff cuts in 1973 were the first steps taken by the Commonwealth in dismantling protectionism which forced manufacturers to reduce workforces and restructure operations. In 1983 the Commonwealth abolished foreign exchange controls and then deregulated the banking system, forcing Australian business into the international economy by opening it to foreign competition and investment.

The full urban consequences of the 'internationalisation' of manufacturing and finance sectors previously protected by government policy are still being played out. The locational outcomes are already apparent. Few Australian cities are well-placed to provide the context for newly international economic activities. While employment in Sydney was diversified during the 1980s in new areas such as tourism, Melbourne and Adelaide continued to rely on previously tariff-protected manufacturing industry. The downturn in their economies resulted in drastic reductions in State government expenditure on services such as cultural facilities which, especially in SA, had also contributed significantly to Adelaide city's economy. Adelaide was surpassed in size as Australia's third largest city by

and industrialisation', chapter 5 in B O'Neil, J Raftery and K Round, eds, *Playford's SA: essays on the history of SA 1933-1968*, Association of Professional Historians, Adelaide 1996.

47 The impact of these changing economic influences on Australian cities is usefully summarised in Australian Institute of Urban Studies, *Urban strategies for Australia: managing the 80's*, AIUS, Canberra 1980, pp 9-12.

48 M Murphy *Challenges of change: the Lend Lease story*, Lend Lease Group of Companies, Sydney 1984, p 148.

Brisbane in the early post-war years. From the 1970s as Queensland attracted increasing numbers of internal migrants and international tourists Brisbane moved closer to challenging Melbourne's status as second city.⁴⁹

In the period up to 1973, Sydney's growth as a corporate headquarters was associated with indigenous capital, whereas Melbourne attracted multinational (local) head offices. However, in the last ten years this differential has tended to diminish with more multi-nationals establishing in Sydney...Daly...demonstrates the significance of global reorganisation of finance and development capitals, the process of switching from manufacturing to real estate and the attractions of Sydney in these processes. The Sydney CBD thus experienced a 'boom and bust' cycle very reminiscent of that experienced by London during the same period...⁵⁰

Both London and Sydney are global 'gateway cities'. The global economy uses a restricted set of world cities as it requires infrastructure such as international airports and commodity markets, and also because multi-national executives 'follow-the-leader' by selecting sites in large, well-known centres. These constraints reinforce the dominance of single 'gateway' cities in most countries. As businesses closed in the other capitals new and transferred businesses clustered in Sydney, forming an agglomeration of services and skills which is attracting further investment.⁵¹ The development of international computer networks and high-speed telecommunications further reinforced that trend as firms dispersed production but concentrated management, which relies on face-to face contact with service providers and clients, in the very centre of a few global cities.

In sum, the date, around 1972-73, divides not only the economic history of the city centre but many related themes. In the first period the main themes include the impact of Australia's economic expansion, modernist architecture, intensive redevelopment, traffic congestion, and the flight of retailers, residents and manufacturers. Since the 1970s the cities have been strongly affected by different processes, including the revival of pedestrian precincts, new emphases on public social and cultural activities and on the value of retailers and residents, mass tourism, and heritage preservation. Economic changes have continued to play a dominant role but business, hence corporate practices and office architecture have assumed new forms in response to such influences as globalisation, Asian investment, economic restructuring, new telecommunications and computer technology.

1.2 National and international economic links

Commonwealth and State governments gave encouragement to foreign investment, especially in manufacturing and mining. In the early post-war years

⁴⁹ B Lepani, G Freed, P Murphy and A McGillivray, *The economic role of cities: Australia in the global economy*, Commonwealth Department of Housing and Regional Development, Urban Futures Research Program, AGPS, Canberra 1995, p 30.

⁵⁰ MH Flett and JB McLoughlin, 'Urban studies and planning in Australia: a preliminary review of the literature', printed paper, School of Environmental Planning, University of Melbourne, Victoria [1985], p 81.

⁵¹ K O'Connor and RJ Stimson, *The economic role of cities: economic change and city development Australia 1971-1991*, AGPS Canberra 1995, pp 1-3.

most capital entered Australia via government channels and by foreign companies establishing subsidiaries. Foreign investment leaped in the 1960s and the economy became more closely tied to those of Australia's major trading partners in the mining industry. 'By the late 1960s, mining in the [Northern] Territory, as elsewhere in Australia, had become a capital intensive industry, dominated by large companies rather than the small [local] companies or partnerships which had been common prior to the war.'⁵² While new offices were constructed in the capitals of those regions by local firms which profited from the boom, national companies such as BHP, and the partners or subsidiaries of overseas companies tended to build new headquarters in Sydney and Melbourne.

'In the 1970s about a quarter of the central business districts in Sydney and Melbourne were said to be owned by foreign (mainly British) capital.'⁵³ Foreign investors were 'main players' in the office redevelopment which changed the city centres. In the 1950s-1960s these were mostly British insurance companies and American corporations. From the late 1960s the presence of Australian private developers and institutions strengthened - the largest, the AMP Society and the MLC Company - with loans from overseas as well as local financiers. In the 1980s ethnic Chinese and Japanese investors emerged as a major force, bolstered by the relaxation of Foreign Investment Review Board guidelines in 1986.⁵⁴ Changes in foreign investment in city centres have reflected changing investment patterns overall, from Britain and the US to Japan and more recently, other Asian sources.

Foreign investment has been concentrated in Sydney and to a lesser degree, Melbourne.

Another difference in the pattern of international links reflects the siting of the capital cities. South African investors have recently emerged as 'a major new force in the Perth property market', buying up inner-city apartments and hotels and widening to include large CBD office buildings. Interest was generated by the migration of white South Africans, Perth's attractions including its political stability, its similarity to Johannesburg, and its relative proximity.⁵⁵ Since self-government in 1978 Darwin has assumed uniquely regional economic links with neighbouring countries largely as a result of the NT government's 'enthusiastic' pursuit of closer trade and cultural relations, particularly with eastern Indonesia.⁵⁶ The main urban impact of links with eastern Indonesia has so far been apparent in the Arafura Sports Festival and expansion in city-based tertiary employment. Plans to expand trade have also found form in major extensions to Darwin's port. Interstate firms are establishing project offices in Darwin which will lead to further office block

52 PF Donovan, *At the other end of Australia. The Commonwealth and the Northern Territory 1911-1978*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1984, p 216.

53 A David and T Wheelwright, *The third wave: Australia and Asian capitalism*, Left Book Club, NSW 1989, p 105.

54 R Ostrow, *The new boy network: taking over corporate Australia*, William Heinemann Australia, Victoria 1987, pp 17-20.

55 *Australian* 10-11 August 1996 (Property).

56 *Report of the Committee on Darwin*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra 1995, p 29.

construction and will intensify political and redevelopment pressures on the older uses of the city and their heritage.

1.3 *Dealing with remoteness, hardship and disasters*

In the first post-war period when manufacturing was so important in urban economies, the physical isolation of the smaller capitals from the main Australian markets in the south-east limited the redevelopment of their city centres. In the 1950s Brisbane still 'carried the mantle of being a branch-office and warehouse town', and even 30 years later it was headquarters for only one national corporation - Mt Isa Mines.⁵⁷ In Brisbane and Perth high-rise development was sparked by mining and property booms involving the exploitation of resources within their own States. Hobart's isolation at the southern end of Tasmania has constrained development since it was eclipsed by Melbourne in the 1860s.

Isolation limited social and cultural as well as economic opportunities. One of the aims of the Festival of Arts, first held in Adelaide in 1960, was to make the arts accessible to 'people of a parochially-minded and geographically-disadvantaged area'.⁵⁸ Psychological isolation also has physical outcomes: Stephenson believes that Perth's isolation kept city planning conventional, with tardy adoption of such civic improvements as pedestrian malls, and that much livelier debates go on in Sydney than anywhere else in Australia about the future of the city centre.⁵⁹

Hardship and disasters also shaped the built form of the smaller centres. An earthquake rocked Adelaide in 1954 and many buildings were damaged. Brisbane River swamped the city of Brisbane in a devastating flood in 1974. A series of disasters - and responses to them - have strongly shaped central Darwin. Five cyclones between 1878 and 1937 all but destroyed the town. During the war half of the city's buildings were destroyed by Japanese bombing and subsequent army occupation. By 1945 little survived of the pre-war city.

But Darwin suffered the single greatest disaster in the history of any Australian city when Cyclone Tracy struck on Christmas Day in 1974. Ninety four per cent of houses were destroyed or seriously damaged and 66 people died. There were 47 000 people in Darwin at the time. General Alan Stretton, head of the Commonwealth's new National Disasters Organisation, was placed in command of Darwin Relief Operation and reduced the population to 10 500 by evacuation to the south. Yet he refused to allow the armed forces to take over restoring the city, deciding instead that it was important for morale to allow 'the people of Darwin to drag themselves out of the rubble'. And they did so.⁶⁰

These decisions had important long-term urban consequences. Within two years the population had returned to its pre-cyclone size but only about half of the

57 V Harris, 'From town to metropolis: contemporary visions of Brisbane', in R Fisher and B Shaw, eds, *Brisbane: people, places and progress*, Brisbane History Group, Queensland, 1995, pp 133 (quotation), 134.

58 Quoted in A Painter, 'Entertainment: the changing scene', in O'Neil et al, p 313.

59 Gordon Stephenson, interview transcript, 1991-1992, tape 18, pp 205-207. JS Battye Library of West Australian History, Oral History Unit, OH 2532.

60 A Stretton, *The furious days: the relief of Darwin*, Collins, Sydney 1976, pp 9. 14-16. 61, 204-206 (quotation, p 205).

former residents had returned. 'A great percentage of the people in Darwin today are part of the huge workforce that is reconstructing the city, together with a new group of citizens who intend to make the northern capital their new home'.⁶¹ Stretton's support for civilian rather than military restoration of the city may have also helped reinforce residents' commitment to rebuilding their old city rather than planning a model city.

Buildings in the city centre were less damaged by the cyclone. Most were quickly repaired but two ruins were kept as a 'grim and poignant reminder of that horrific night in December 1974'. The Town Hall of 1884 and the Anglican church, built in 1902, were valued as rare stone buildings in the architectural style of colonial SA. The cyclone left standing only some broken walls of the hall and the church's wartime memorial porch. These have been stabilised and preserved.⁶² In response to the cyclone, builders and architects developed a 'concrete bunker' mentality, abandoning lightweight materials for stolid, ground-hugging forms: the massive concrete construction of the Anglican Cathedral (built around 1977) was typical.⁶³ In further reaction, architects are returning to lighter styles with greater airflow, better suited to the city's climate and history.⁶⁴

1.4 Transport and communications

Efficient transport and communications are essential for urban economic development. The provision of infrastructure remained primarily a responsibility of State and local governments.⁶⁵ Just as colonial governments built roads, rails and telegraph lines to funnel trade into the capital cities, Australian governments continued to spend heavily on promoting access by road, rail, ship and telecommunications. These links promoted international and interstate as well as regional use. Sea-borne trade with overseas countries remained important but industrial cargo loading was shifted away from central Sydney and Brisbane removing to Botany Bay and the mouth of the Brisbane River respectively. Circular Quay kept its ferries but the last major port development in central Sydney was a modern passenger terminal built on the western side of the Quay for the tourist-liner trade which flourished between the 1940s and 1960s.⁶⁶ Since then air travel has replaced ship passenger transport and the terminal is only occasionally used for pleasure cruisers.

Darwin's port function was never major but it has had a strong influence on the city centre. The Royal Australian Navy also played its part: a whole precinct from

61 Stretton, p 196.

62 A Welke and H Wilson, 'Darwin central area heritage study', Report to Northern Territory Conservation Commission through National Trust of Australia (Northern Territory), Darwin 1993, pp 222-224, 257-259 (quotation).

63 M Evans to S Marsden, 1996.

64 R Hooper to S Marsden, 1996.

65 In 1990 about 85 per cent of public sector infrastructure was in the State and local sector. D Borthwick, 'Funding the future infrastructure: a view from the Commonwealth Treasury', National Infrastructure Committee, *The third national infrastructure conference*, AGPS, Canberra 1990, p 231.

66 N Rich, 'Harbour works', in D Fraser, ed *Sydney: from settlement to city. An engineering history of Sydney*, Engineers Australia, Sydney 1989, pp 160-161.

Bennet Street east to the wharf was acquired by the navy by the 1950s and used as its base with shore functions housed in the old public and commercial buildings. That area had been the main focus of the city before the war but civilians were kept out of the area for many years by the navy and so both European-Australian and Chinese-Australian business relocated in Smith Street west of Bennett Street. Mirroring that western shift a new post office was built in the same locality in the late 1950s.⁶⁷ There is still a strong navy presence in Darwin and since the 1970s mineral exports, mainly uranium, have gone out by sea.

Hobart, like Sydney, was its State's principal port. In the mid-1960s more than a third of imports and of exports were shipped through Hobart. The main exports were apples and zinc.⁶⁸ Besides these activities the port continued to exert a strong influence on land use in the city centre.⁶⁹ Hobart in 1954, demonstrated 'a close integration between port and town'. The pattern of Hobart's central functions also demonstrated a certain concentricity: there was the cove and its port facilities, with government buildings grouped nearby; alongside them was a well defined commercial core surrounded by offices then warehouses on the south and east with mixed commercial-industrial-residential uses on the west and north. Commercialism was also pushing outwards in sectoral fashion along the lines of access in the low land between the Domain and the western piedmont.⁷⁰

Sydney demonstrated a similar pattern. The change in both cities since then reflects both the glamourisation of the ports and their continuing influence as factories, warehouses and waterside worker dwellings have been recycled or replaced with office towers, hotels and public buildings oriented to the harbour. In the 1950s the entire western boundary of central Sydney housed port-related functions: port workers' housing in the Rocks, and warehousing and light industry in the streets running parallel to Darling Harbour. Some residential use survives in the Rocks, mainly at Millers Point, and some shipping ties up at the northern end of Darling Harbour but the rest has been replaced by entertainment and an expanded office zone. The most recent manifestation of this change was the remaking of southern Darling Harbour as a tourist and entertainment site in the late 1980s.

Although their importance as a form of public transport also declined with the rise of private car use, passenger ferries are a significant feature of Sydney Harbour and Circular Quay. Ferries also operated in Hobart and Brisbane. Traffic engineer Wilbur Smith noted there were 15 ferrying passengers across the Brisbane River, including at Edward Street and Customs House, and other services travelling up and down the river in 1964.⁷¹

67 P Forrest to S Marsden, 1996.

68 'Report on land use survey of central business district 1967-1968', City Engineer's Dept, City of Hobart, 1968, pp 26, 27.

69 RJ Solomon, *Urbanisation: the evolution of an Australian capital*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney 1976, p 345.

70 Solomon, pp 223, 344.

71 Wilbur Smith and Associates, 'Brisbane transportation study', vol 1, Brisbane 1965, p 3. (URP library.)

By contrast with international trade in bulky goods, interstate trade and transport moved from the sea to rail and roads. A profound difference between pre-war and post-war transport policies was the change in emphasis from providing for public and mass-transport: trams, trains, shipping, to private transport in cars and trucks, on roads and freeways. In the cities during the early post-war years high rates of public transport use persisted, due to the relatively high cost of cars and wartime petrol rationing which was prolonged until 1950. 'But could this continue in an era of rising incomes, expectations and car ownership?'⁷² The answer was no.

With suburbanisation more and more residents came to live beyond tram and train networks and made increasing numbers of journeys to destinations other than the city centre. As both cause and consequence car ownership rose rapidly. In the decade 1947-57 alone, the number of vehicles on Melbourne's roads doubled.⁷³ People abandoned both public transport and their bicycles. In Brisbane public transport use declined from 45 per cent of all travel to 29 per cent in the few short years between 1960-64.⁷⁴ In Melbourne workers' use of bicycles plummeted from nearly ten per cent to two per cent between 1951 and 1964.⁷⁵ Governments may have responded to these changes by adopting an approach recommended in 1953 by the MMBW, that is, by co-ordinating all tram, train and bus services. Instead, public transport remained unco-ordinated and operators competed with each other's services rather than with cars, while overall patronage continued to fall.⁷⁶

In a new age of public spending all attention was on building for cars. Some of the most powerful and pervasive agencies were the State's road construction departments (helped by earmarked Commonwealth funds) such as SA's Highways Department and the Department of Main Roads in NSW. Their work had both direct and indirect impact on city centres, as they razed central sites, both eased and accelerated traffic congestion, built freeways to by-pass the old radial road system and attached outlying rural districts and towns to the city's urban catchment with upgraded roads and new freeways. In the 1970s the DMR pushed 'freeway construction...north to the Newcastle metropolitan area and south toward the Wollongong area, thereby hastening the day when there will be but one giant megalopolis on the New South Wales coast'.⁷⁷

The grand post-war transport edifices are the sweeping forms of high bridges and wide freeways; the most ubiquitous are carparks and privately-built petrol stations. Bridge and freeway construction and the widening of central intersections reshaped city centres as radically as high-rise and large-scale office buildings. The Cahill Expressway in Sydney is the best-known symbol. This was designed as a

⁷² P Mees, *Do public choice and public transport mix? An Australian-Canadian comparison*, URP working paper no 51, ANU 1996, p 14.

⁷³ Lewis, p 116.

⁷⁴ Wilbur Smith and Associates, p 78.

⁷⁵ Mees, p 15.

⁷⁶ Mees, p 15.

⁷⁷ RH Leach, *The governance of metropolitan areas in Australia with lessons from Canadian and American experience*, Centre for Research on Federal Financial Relations, ANU Canberra 1977, p 38.

distributor for traffic between North and East Sydney to by-pass the city centre, with an overhead roadway above Circular Quay, a tunnel under a corner of the Botanic Gardens and a concrete bridge to carry Art Gallery Road. It was opened in 1962.⁷⁸ With subsequent construction of the elevated Western Distributor, Warringah Freeway and other roadworks whole precincts of colonial buildings were swept away elsewhere in Sydney.⁷⁹ The same events were repeated in the other cities. In his survey of 1840s townscapes in central Hobart carried out in 1962, Solomon identified an 'area of outstanding preservation centred on Burnett Street...in 1965 it was razed to provide for increased traffic flow'.⁸⁰

The transformation was most marked in central Brisbane, where an American consultant Wilbur Smith prepared a transportation study recommending construction of 80 miles of 'controlled access freeways' (three traversing the city centre), expressways, (including a riverside expressway which now parallels the river through the city centre), five new bridges, city centre carparks, a transportation centre built above Central Station and the replacement of trams and trolley buses with diesel buses. All recommendations assumed that 'the central business district will remain the focal point of the City's expanded activities and generate [increasing] travel...'⁸¹ These traffic proposals were incorporated in the first town plan of 1965 and implemented by Brisbane City Council.⁸² The impact of American methodology in transport planning on the post-war city centres cannot be over-emphasised. This was reinforced by the actual part played by American traffic engineers, above all Wilbur Smith & Associates and De Leuw Cather. The two firms between them prepared plans which were implemented at least in part in nearly every capital city in the 1960s and 1970s, Wilbur Smith in Brisbane, Melbourne and Hobart, and De Leuw and Cather in Sydney⁸³ and Perth⁸⁴. In the circumstances, it seems appropriate that the only post-war structures in central Brisbane to be placed on the Register of the National Estate should be Victoria Bridge and the council's multi-storey council carpark.

In Perth, on the recommendations of the Stephenson-Hepburn Plan of 1955, which established the basis for planning in the period of expansion, the Narrows Bridge was constructed in 1959 and freeways swept around the city.⁸⁵ The road system also brought major landscape changes to central Perth. With 'The

78 D Fraser, 'Roads and streets', in Fraser, p 61.

79 For a history of these events, see D Ball, *The road to nowhere? Urban freeway planning in Sydney to 1977 and in the present day*, URP working paper no 51, ANU 1996.

80 Solomon, p 187.

81 Wilbur Smith and Associates, pp IV (quotation), V, VI.

82 V Harris, p 136; and see W Smith & Assoc, 'Brisbane Transportation Study'.

83 Ball, p 14.

84 Information provided by P Mees and P Troy, URP, 13 February 1997; the URP library holds several of the relevant consultants' reports, including W Smith & Assoc, 'Brisbane Transportation Study'.

85 G Seddon and D Ravine, *A city and its setting. Images of Perth Western Australia*, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Fremantle 1986, pp 187, 285.

Causeway' it enclosed Perth Water as a lake within a basin whose rim is fringed with parkland and high-rise buildings.⁸⁶

At street level, traffic signals, road signs and parking meters proliferated. Parking meters were first installed in Melbourne in 1955, Brisbane in 1957 and Adelaide in 1958. Over a thousand meters were installed in Adelaide, where the manager of the department store Miller Anderson looked to American experience in observing, 'that a city would die if it could not provide adequate parking'.⁸⁷ There was a simple correlation between the rebuilding of city centres, the increase in traffic and the demand for bigger roads: 'the size of the central area and the width of the streets remain the same but the buildings get bigger and higher holding more people and attracting more traffic.'⁸⁸ Planning which permitted car parking within the new office towers and which did little to restrict car traffic abetted the congestion of the city centres and their transformation from public transport-oriented and pedestrian-friendly places. Retailing declined because the car had taken over the streets and a city centre such as Perth was 'no longer a pleasant environment where people can do their shopping and meet friends'.⁸⁹

Government policies were often contradictory. Bridges were built to bring more traffic into the city and to help avoid it. The opening of the Tasman Bridge across the Derwent in 1964 for the first time enabled residents on the opposite shore to Hobart able to reach the city quickly. The impact on both suburbanisation and city centre business was immediate but the dependence on a rapid link with the centre was made manifest when the bridge was rammed and badly damaged by an ore ship in 1975 and was not reopened until 1977.

Despite the importance of road transport, for most of the post-war period, suburban rail, tram and bus routes followed the radial pattern established in colonial times, which continued to channel traffic into the city centres. Local shopping precincts were aligned to main roads or stations and remained subordinate to central business and commerce. The relationships between centre and suburb changed dramatically after motor car use became nearly universal in the 1950s but even today, in such a large and complex city as Melbourne, the majority of suburban residents journey to work in the city and inner suburbs along radial road, tram and rail routes.⁹⁰

Provision for public transport varied widely between the cities. It was not all simply a matter of downgrading and replacement. Construction of Sydney's city loop electric railway system had a long history. The Railways Department started

86 I Molyneux, comp, *Looking around Perth. A guide to the architecture of Perth and surrounding towns*, Wescolour Press, East Fremantle 1981, p 72.

87 *Advertiser* 8 August 1960, quoted in P Sumerling, 'Playford and "progress" in the City of Adelaide', manuscript loaned to S Marsden by the author [p 19].

88 D Winston, *Sydney's great experiment, the progress of the Cumberland County Plan*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1957, caption, opposite p 82.

89 L Nilson, 'Planning a city in a region: the central city area', in *The city and region of Perth, a case study of the capital city of Western Australia*, Papers and proceedings of the 10th Congress of the Australian Planning Institute, Perth 1968, p 76.

90 N Low, 'The Kennett government of Victoria: catastrophe or continuity?', paper presented at URP seminar, ANU, 14 October 1996, p 19.

construction in 1917, completing two underground stations in the city in the 1920s. The loop was completed in 1956 when Circular Quay Station was opened.⁹¹ A similar underground rail loop was proposed for Melbourne in 1929; State cabinet approved plans for the concept thirty years later; the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Authority was established in the 1970s, and completed the work in stages from 1982.⁹² In a later period, State governments in Perth and Brisbane electrified their suburban railways, with marked increase in patronage. By contrast, suburban railway services ceased in Hobart in 1975.

In all capitals except Melbourne tram services were run down. Street tramways were phased out in Adelaide and Perth in 1958, in Sydney in 1961 and, amidst much opposition, in Brisbane in 1969. Extension of Melbourne's tramway system stopped in 1956 and new suburbs depended on *ad hoc* private bus services.⁹³ But Melbourne kept its 'green monsters'. When competing road users pushed for their removal, 'Chairman Risson of the Tramways Board had the tramlines set in cement, making it far more difficult to remove them'.⁹⁴

The Commonwealth government was the major provider of airports. The obsession with near-city centre locations is revealed in the siting of most of the post-war airports in the face of rapid suburbanisation. As was inevitable, housing soon surrounded the airports, making further extension physically impossible, hugely expensive or highly disruptive to residents. The siting of Australia's international airports has played an important part in hastening central business growth in particular cities, and in accentuating differences in rates and types of development between them. 'With Australia's first international airport and agglomerations of activities dependent on access to international air traffic, such as the regional headquarter functions of transnational corporations, financial services and, more recently, tourism, the service industries have therefore concentrated in Sydney.'⁹⁵ The 'globalisation' of the Australian economy in the 1980s and 1990s has further advanced clustering in Sydney.⁹⁶

'Telecommunications represents the new urban infrastructure.'⁹⁷ As the information sector (communications, finance, property, business, public administration, community services and education) is concentrated in the city centres it is hardly surprising that the increase in telephone traffic, use of mobile phones, high-speed data lines, fibre optic networks, facsimile machines and personal computers is most evident and has had a major impact in the city. The rate of change is so fast, however, that physical relics of each development are likely to be

91 L Coltheart and S Maddrell, 'A research guide to the history of public works in New South Wales', draft edition, Public Works Department, Sydney, c1986, p 35.

92 Lewis, p 134.

93 Mees, p 16.

94 L Frost and T Dingle, 'Infrastructure, technology and change', in P Troy, ed., *Technological change and the city*, Federation Press, Sydney 1995, p 27.

95 Lepani et al, p 7.

96 O'Connor p 3.

97 P Newton, quoted in D Lamberton, 'Communications', in Troy *Technological change and the city*, p 85.

few and short-lived, although it is evident in the globalisation of the urban economy and in changes in the city workforce and its working conditions. While the ‘hollowing out’ of large corporations may have reduced the numbers of city centre workers, it has not led to the decentralising of the businesses themselves, nor their managers, to whom face-to-face relationships and close physical proximity remain crucial. But how big will future skyscrapers need to be?

1.5 Business, finance and speculation

Hartwell and Lane divide the history of Australian entrepreneurship into four periods: 1788-1850, the commercial-agricultural period; 1851-1890, pastoral-mining; 1891-1948, national-industrial; and 1949-present, international-corporative.⁹⁸ The most important areas of enterprise in the last period have been mining, financial, commercial and industrial. Large business firms began to appear in the third period but only since 1949 has the size of firms greatly increased, with a period of significant restructuring not occurring until the late 1970s.⁹⁹ Melbourne’s role as a national and Sydney’s as an international financial centre were cemented in this period.

Each of these aspects of post-war business, and the underlying economic cycles, has had a profound impact on the city centres. For the production and exchange of goods and services lies at the heart of the modern city. As Solomon noted in his study of central Hobart, the most striking functional development revealed in the 1954 census, as compared to 1847, was ‘the real advent of business offices...Their twenty-fold increase in number indicates the arrival of personal, professional and business administrative services at a scale quite foreign to mid-nineteenth populations at large’.¹⁰⁰ The great majority of new buildings in the city centres in the post-war years related to finance or business generally.

The city centre is Australia’s marketplace, investment centre, office block and department store. The rise and spread of office blocks is expressive not only of modern architecture but also of wide economic and political changes, for example the great increase in employment in service industries since the war relative to primary and secondary industries outside Australian city centres; and the restructuring of corporate Australia in the 1980s following the abolition of foreign exchange controls and the deregulation of banking.

The Commonwealth government lifted restrictions on share dealings and stock exchanges in 1947, opening the way for speculative investment in industries that were starved of funds during the five-year suspension of trading. Inevitably after the restraints placed on business both by the depression and wartime controls, and as the population boomed after the war, there was an avalanche of new companies. In the ten years following 1945 the number of companies listed on the Sydney Stock Exchange nearly doubled from 522 to 909, growing only slightly after that to 1043 by 1970.¹⁰¹ A pronounced feature of the 1950s and 1960s was the

⁹⁸ Hartwell and Lane, p 15.

⁹⁹ Hartwell and Lane, p 24.

¹⁰⁰ Solomon, p 219.

¹⁰¹ Hartwell and Lane, p 222.

development of the holding company, mergers and take-overs. Many firms in the smaller capitals were taken over by companies with headquarters in Sydney and Melbourne: a history of the Brisbane Stock Exchange pinpoints 1954 as the year 'the Southern take-over of Queensland companies began'.¹⁰² From the late 1960s decline in manufacturing investment was overtaken by investment in city offices, triggering further, and more extensive office construction in the city centres.

Another round of takeovers took place in the 1980s as international investors and firms moved in. In the 1980s as the Commonwealth deregulated the financial system 'takeover specialists, greenmailers, white knights, share traders, investors and speculators pushed aside old conventions and practices and led the restructuring of business and enterprise', and a sustained rise in the stockmarket 'also saw the inevitable meteoric rises and falls in individual and company fortunes.' For reasons which are implicit in this description in the late 1980s there followed an 'unprecedented attack on corporate Australia'.¹⁰³ One feature common to both periods of takeover is the increasing tendency to downgrade operations in the smaller capitals in favour of expanding or building corporate offices in Melbourne and Sydney. Corporations, banks and insurance companies are withdrawing from the smaller cities, leaving their post-war towers such as Shell Building in Hobart leased to tenants.

Who constructed the new office blocks after World War II? The construction of the Grand United Building in Castlereagh Street, Sydney in 1947 has been described as 'part of an ongoing tradition of centralised commercial, financial and professional dealings in the CBD'.¹⁰⁴ Between 1957 and 1966 British insurance companies were major developers, building more offices in Sydney than either the Australian development companies or life assurance or insurance companies.¹⁰⁵ In this early phase, apart from British and American companies there were three other main groups: government bodies and large Australian corporations such as the AMP and BHP; and property developers which derived from construction companies such as Lend Lease and its main rival LJ Hooker Ltd.¹⁰⁶

Lend Lease (originally Civil & Civic) was set up in response to an Australian mission which visited Amsterdam in 1949 to invite the interest of companies in the Snowy River Scheme. Two Dutch companies, the biggest builder, Bredero's and the Royal Dutch Harbour Company, sent an engineer, GJ Dusseldorp, to appraise the situation. He was so impressed by the country's possibilities that the companies formed a joint venture, Civil & Civic Contractors with Dusseldorp in charge. They established themselves in government contracts in the Snowy Mountains and nearby Canberra before expanding to Sydney and the other capitals. In order to

102 AL Loughed, *The Brisbane Stock Exchange 1884-1984*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane 1984, p 134.

103 (Including the several quotations) L Cox (chairman, Australian Stock Exchange) Foreword to Hartwell and Lane, p 10.

104 Central Sydney Heritage Inventory (database), SCC.

105 Ostrow, p 17.

106 Murphy, p 56.

take control of design and hence, construction costs, Civil & Civic established a finance and investment company, Lend Lease in 1958.¹⁰⁷

By the mid-1960s a new group of developers had emerged. 'The financial institutions, which had provided the principal market for Lend Lease development projects...had learned a lot from the developers, and could see benefits in developing their own investment properties'.¹⁰⁸ Lend Lease was also involved in suburban development, both commercial and residential.¹⁰⁹ They had been the first developer to enter the city centre market in 1958 (Caltex House) and were the first to leave it. By the time of the credit squeeze in 1973 which brought down successful development companies and left offices empty, Lend Lease was building shopping centres in outer suburbs.

However, several city centre projects were completed during the next decade, especially in capitals other than Sydney. Well-known central towers built by Civil & Civic included, in Sydney, Caltex House (1958), Lend Lease House (1961), Australia Square (1968), MLC building (1978); Regent Hotel (1980), as well as stage 1 of the Opera House but *not* a proposal for the high-rise redevelopment of the Rocks.¹¹⁰ In Melbourne, its first contract was in 1959 with the Consolidated Zinc building, Prince's Gate (1966), the Reserve Bank (1960s), and Nauru House (1977). In Brisbane the company built the Bank of NSW and the Ansett Terminal in the 1960s, and in the 1980s redeveloped Central Railway incorporating offices and the Sheraton Hotel. In Perth, the company built the State government offices; its first project in Hobart was a multi-storey office for the City Mutual Life Assurance Society, followed by construction of subsequent CML buildings in Perth, Darwin, Melbourne and Brisbane.¹¹¹

Business districts expanded further in the late 1960s as the finance and merchant banking sector, with strong overseas shareholdings, challenged the conservative Australian banking sector. Private developers - including groups headed by post-war immigrants such as Lustig and Moar, Grollo and Dusseldorp - and local institutions - the largest, the AMP Society and the MLC Company - dominated the market. Multi-storey headquarters were also built on the proceeds of the resources boom, by Lang Hancock in Perth and Mt Isa mines in Brisbane.

Property boom was followed by crash, in the early 1970s and again in 1989-90. In the bust of the 1970s many British institutions pulled out. Government bodies continued to invest in the city centre, not only Australian agencies but also overseas governments and banks which built office blocks in Melbourne and Sydney as a form of investment. Nauru House was built in Melbourne by the government of the Pacific island of Nauru as an investment for the future when its phosphate reserves have been fully exploited. Investment in capital city property markets by ethnic Chinese (South East Asian) and Japanese emerged as a major force during the 1980s. Asian investment, which accounted for less than 15 per

¹⁰⁷ Murphy, pp 29-31.

¹⁰⁸ Murphy, p 113.

¹⁰⁹ Murphy, p 51.

¹¹⁰ Murphy, p 92.

¹¹¹ Murphy, p 112, 123 and *passim*.

cent of total foreign investment in Australia in the mid-1970s increased to 40 per cent by the mid-1980s, much of it directed to the capital city centres. The Malaysian syndicate Ipoh Garden Berhad completed the restoration of Sydney's Queen Victoria Building and the Japanese company Kumagai Gum redeveloped the Adelaide Railway Station precinct.¹¹²

Foreign banks joined local financiers in lending large sums for property development in a further frenzy of office building in the 1980s. Westpac Bank, which embarked on a series of take-overs and business deals, found itself with a billion dollar loss in 1992. State financial institutions were also caught up in the property development frenzy but public tolerance of the shady deals and spectacular collapses characteristic of many private developers did not extend to the massive losses incurred by state banks, and governments in Victoria, SA and WA were resoundingly defeated as a result. Long-established State Banks were dismantled leaving luxury high-rise offices as memorials to their demise. The property collapse which followed the State Bank disaster of the late 1980s and early 1990s was particularly pronounced in Adelaide.

1.6 Marketing, retailing and wholesaling

Shopping emporia had emerged at the end of the nineteenth century with big department stores catering for particular markets a phenomenon of the interwar years. In Sydney, David Jones' prestige shops were in Elizabeth Street and the middle-range Grace Brothers in George Street. Lower George Street near Railway Square became an important retail precinct in the inter-war period, tapping both rail passengers to Central Station and drivers along this main thoroughfare.¹¹³ Central Sydney and Melbourne accounted for about a third of retail sales in the 1950s, a share drastically pruned during the next decade as suburban shopping complexes were built.

Chermside, Australia's first drive-in shopping centre, was opened in suburban Brisbane in 1957 and 'led the move of Australian retailing from the city to the post war suburbs'.¹¹⁴

Central retailers recorded a declining share of total metropolitan sales (although retailers such as Myer's from Melbourne and John Martin's in Adelaide created their own competition by opening suburban complexes). Efforts to retain shoppers, by building their own carparks, did little to stem the decline. By the 1990s central Sydney accounted for less than 10 per cent and central Melbourne less than 5 per cent of retail sales.¹¹⁵ Several department stores were closed and demolished or converted to other uses, especially in the main retail area at the southern end of central Sydney.

At the same time, Sydney- and Melbourne- based companies took over firms in the other cities, matching business takeovers generally from the mid-1950s. In

¹¹² Ostrow, pp 18-21 (quotation, p 19).

¹¹³ McDonald, Thorp, *Review of heritage inventory for central Sydney* pp 7, 8.

¹¹⁴ P Spearitt, 'Suburban cathedrals: the rise of the drive-in shopping centre', in G Davison, T Dingle and S O'Hanlon, eds, *The cream brick frontier: histories of Australian suburbia*, Department of History, Monash University, Victoria, 1995, p 97.

¹¹⁵ Spearitt, in Davison et al, pp 101, 103.

Brisbane by the end of the decade most large retail stores had succumbed, including Finney Isles (David Jones, Sydney) and McWhirters, and Allan and Stark (both by Myer Emporium, Melbourne).¹¹⁶

In Hobart during the 1950s and 1960s the Liverpool Street store of Brownell's was amalgamated with Johnston and Miller's Murray Street store, and the whole became part of Myer's, the country's largest retailer. Fitzgerald's of Collins Street, the leading Tasmanian retailer, absorbed the Goodwill store in Elizabeth Street. The Cat and Fiddle Alley was completely enclosed and redeveloped as an arcade by the hardware firm Charles Davis. An important outcome of these mergers was the provision of internal access with intercommunication between adjoining shops extended to give, what was at the time in Australia, 'probably unique walk-through circulation from any street frontage to any other'.¹¹⁷ The Cat and Fiddle Arcade is now something of a rarity in capital city centres, a 'classic' '60s shopping arcade'.¹¹⁸ Retailers in the other capitals followed suit.

The history of inner city marketing and retailing provides an instructive example of how urban historiography is coloured by the dominant historical trends in Sydney and Melbourne. In both cities retailing drained away to suburban centres but this trend was less marked in the other capitals until the 1970s (except Darwin, for geographical reasons). In 1962 central shops and department stores made more than 90 per cent of clothing and drapery sales in metropolitan Hobart, where the development of shopping centres was slower than in the other cities.¹¹⁹ As Scott noted in 1959, suburban competition in Sydney was also favoured by the location of the CBD, as none of the others was so far off centre.¹²⁰

However, as take-overs continued, by the 1970s retailing in Australia was essentially a matter of franchising operations dominated by large retail chains. By the late 1980s the top ten retail outlets were owned by three or four companies.¹²¹ Using information technology they centralised operations in their home cities (Sydney and Melbourne) and cut costs in other city centres by closing surplus stores and retrenching staff. In Hobart all the old family businesses were taken over by national companies, the last of them Fitzgerald's (by Harris Scarfe) and Soundy.¹²²

In Adelaide the latest casualty of this process is the John Martin's store in Rundle Mall. David Jones bought the 131-year-old South Australian business in 1985.¹²³ David Jones built its own elegant department store in the same street in 1959-62, constructing a sheer white and black marble upper facade unbroken by

¹¹⁶ Lougheed, p 134.

¹¹⁷ Solomon, *Urbanisation*, p 217. See also Scripps, pp 59-60.

¹¹⁸ B Lennard to S Marsden.

¹¹⁹ 'Report on land use survey of central business district 1967-1968', City Engineer's Department, City of Hobart, 1968, p 27.

¹²⁰ Scott, p 292.

¹²¹ Hartwell and Lane, p 390.

¹²² B McNeil to S Marsden.

¹²³ *Australian* 21 February 1997.

windows, leaving much larger and more flexible floor areas than provided in Adelaide's other stores.¹²⁴ This difference was probably one factor in the decision to close John Martin's - and the profit anticipated in redeveloping the prime site as a hotel and entertainment complex. The government supports the redevelopment but 550 jobs will be lost at the store. The event, rational as it may seem in broad economic terms, highlights the damage such a closure inflicts on the economic life of the city concerned, and the threat to its heritage. 'If ever there was to be a symbol of the decline of SA, it is the closing of the icon, John Martin's...'.¹²⁵

The retailing decline prompted alliances between government ministers, councillors and traders who sought ways to arrest the trend and encourage suburban shoppers to return. These strategies took several forms, albeit common to every capital city (governments and traders closely observed measures taken in the other cities). Broadly, these measures were of two kinds: those which expedited car access, and those which encouraged pedestrians. While inner suburban communities opposed the destruction threatened by radial freeways and ring routes, strongly entrenched interest groups supported them. In the 1960s, the non-resident businessmen who dominated city councils feared the decline in the proportion of suburban people who came into the centre to shop and work. 'They blamed it entirely on poor access and the lack of parking space'.¹²⁶

Car-favouring measures were more prevalent until the 1970s, and pedestrian-favouring measures have been more prevalent since then. Streets were closed to create pedestrian malls and interior malls were created or refurbished such as, in Sydney, Centrepont and the Strand Arcade in the 1970s and the Mid City Centre and the Queen Victoria Building in the 1980s. 'These developments all recreate in various forms the total/cultural shopping experience available in the suburbs since the 1950s...'.¹²⁷ By contrast to that suburban experience, the other retailing change has been the rise of 'theme shopping'. This is dominated by arts, crafts and cafes and located in distinctively urban settings. Some of these were in old produce markets like the East End Market site and Central Market in Adelaide and Victoria Market in Melbourne, after the colourful and messy wholesale produce markets had been moved to fringe suburban sites. Others were in old waterfront districts, the Rocks in Sydney and Salamanca Place in Hobart. Thousands of people also crowd Darwin's dry season Sunset Markets.

Although these changes slowed rather than reversed the trend to suburban shopping they have helped alter public perceptions of the city centre. The changes were principally economic in motivation, the result of crisis and reconsolidation of retailing as a major city centre activity'.¹²⁸ But the refocus on shoppers' needs as pedestrians also partly restored the city to its people, despite the distances which

124 Royal Australian Institute of Architects, 'RAIA register of significant architecture - SA', report, RAIA, Adelaide 1986. The building, designed by South Australian architects Hassell and McConnell, was designated by the RAIA in this report as 'meritorious'.

125 Michael Lennon, quoted in the *Australian* 21 February 1997.

126 Dingle and Rasmussen, p 242.

127 Meagher, p 378.

128 Meagher, p 378.

had opened up between the centre and its metropolitan population after the war. The new developments, further promoted by longer shopping hours and Sunday trading, have fostered the most important form of tourism: visits by local people. This phenomenon was remarked upon most frequently by Perth and Brisbane informants perhaps because it has happened there most recently.

1.7 Housing and lodging

Housing and lodging as a business or speculative undertaking has always been a major industry in Australian city centres, including hotels, hostels, boarding-houses and serviced apartments as well as terraces, flats and medium-density housing. However, the market sought by inner-city developers has shifted from people of moderate and low incomes who were typical tenants up to the 1950s - working-class families in terraces, single men in boarding-houses, commercial travellers in hotels - to an almost exclusively middle- and high-income group, including management-level employees in serviced apartments. This change was most marked in central Sydney and Melbourne. A trend started with construction in Sydney of the Park Regis, central Sydney's first post-war high rise apartment building, completed in 1967.¹²⁹

Most of Sydney's old hotels were demolished for site redevelopment. Sydney's new role as an international financial and tourist city attracted investment in the form of luxury hotels and serviced apartments and their numbers doubled in the second half of the 1980s.¹³⁰ Low-rental accommodation for permanent residents was replaced by high-cost owner-occupied housing as working-class places were converted or demolished for new apartments. Even in the 'frame' districts much old and low-income housing has been replaced with high-income and high-rise housing.¹³¹ The speculative construction of 'walk-up' flats tended to dominate in the first post-war period, into the 1970s, and then more up-market conversions, townhouses and apartment blocks. By 1981 townhouses/flats represented 90 per cent of total dwellings in the City of Sydney.¹³² Most of its boarding houses were demolished or converted to strata title flats. This same thing happened in central Melbourne, where the numbers of boarding houses and other 'non-private dwellings' dropped from 4800 in 1947 to 1221 by 1971.¹³³ There was nowhere near the same intensity of redevelopment in the other capitals but there were similar trends.

Just as office towers effaced the mixed shapes, low heights and social variety of central city buildings these new forms of accommodation substituted high-cost, high-rise buildings with a restricted range of users for the widely varying sizes and social uses of the older buildings. Even when existing buildings - such as boarding houses - were converted rather than replaced, the new residences housed fewer

¹²⁹ P Spearitt and C De Marco, *Planning Sydney's future*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988, p 101.

¹³⁰ Meagher, p 380.

¹³¹ Spearitt and De Marco, pp 43-48.

¹³² Spearitt and De Marco, p 44, table 4.11.

¹³³ 'Melbourne's inner area - a position statement', MMBW Planning Branch report, Melbourne 1977, p 27.

tenants and none with low incomes. Since the late 1960s, gentrification, with young, middle-class couples buying and restoring old terraces and cottages, has had the same effect.

More recently inner city housing projects on obsolete sites have been heavily subsidised by State and Commonwealth governments, during the 1990s with 'Better Cities' money. Even here, more low-income housing may be destroyed than provided, as in the East Perth Development Project.¹³⁴ Nor will efforts to retain the built heritage of lodging in the city centre preserve its cultural heritage, that is, as low-cost rental accommodation and inexpensive hotel rooms.

1.8 Professional services, institutions and associations

Webb coined the term 'Establishment precinct' to embrace the area in central Perth including State government offices, Town Hall, Law Chambers, Anglican cathedral, former Presbyterian Church, Government House, Supreme Court and the Weld Club.¹³⁵ To this old 'Establishment' was added Commonwealth institutions. Some of the most impressive post-war buildings have been law courts constructed by the Commonwealth in the capital city centres. The Commonwealth-State Law Courts built in Sydney in association with McConnel Smith and Johnson earned the RAIA NSW Chapter Merit Award in 1977.¹³⁶

The clustering of 'establishment' places includes the rooms of related professions. Law firms retain city offices near the courts. In Sydney, barristers keep rooms in Macquarie Street. In Brisbane, Ann Street and Queen Street were 'top dollar' for law firms although they are moving to riverside locations in Eagle Street, as part of the rediscovery of the Brisbane River.¹³⁷ The central location of medical practitioners reflects the original siting of public hospitals. In Hobart doctors' surgeries have concentrated in Macquarie Street, and in Adelaide on North Terrace in the same street as the Royal Adelaide Hospital and the University of Adelaide. From the 1960s, doctors and other professionals requiring easy vehicular access for themselves and their clients, began to move into adjacent frame districts, such as West Perth and North Adelaide. The phenomenon of professional firms occupying and eventually demolishing historical residences is a strong component in the outward expansion of CBD functions.

Dispersal of stockbrokers is a more recent phenomenon. Stock exchanges were formed to create markets by bringing brokers face-to-face and so played an important part in concentrating financial services and company headquarters in city centres. Mining was the catalyst for exchanges established in the capital cities in the late nineteenth century and the Sydney Stock Exchange was typical in its 'over-reliance on mining' until well after World War II.¹³⁸ Melbourne's sharebroking was more diverse and dominated trading until the 1970s with big

¹³⁴ I Alexander and A May, 'Land use change in the Perth CBD', slide commentary, 1994

¹³⁵ I Hocking, 'Growth and change in central Perth', in MP Morison and J White, eds. *Western towns and buildings*, University of WA Press, Nedlands 1979, pp 287-288.

¹³⁶ Pegrum, p 98.

¹³⁷ H Gregory to S Marsden, Brisbane August 1996.

¹³⁸ S Salsbury and K Sweeney, *The bull, the bear and the kangaroo: the history of the Sydney Stock Exchange*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney 1988, p 2.

firms, led by Sir Ian Potter, assuming many of the functions of merchant banks. The space demands of stock exchanges actually grew in the 1960s in response to the mining boom, the diversification of business, the rise of popular interest in share trading and large government projects. Adelaide Stock Exchange retained its original federation building (refitting the interior after it was gutted by fire); Brisbane Stock Exchange moved into Network House in Queen Street in 1967, and Sydney Stock Exchange moved into Exchange Centre in Bond Street in 1979. Sydney's new exchange increased floor space by 60 per cent, enhanced areas open to the public and housed computers in a basement.¹³⁹

Computers were soon moved out of the basement. Space demands in exchanges decreased as the open trading floors where 'chalkies' kept track of transactions were replaced by computer displays and traders no longer needed to be physically present. Computer networks also facilitated share-trading independent of local stock exchanges and, after deregulation of Australia's financial system, exposed them to strong overseas competition. The chairman of Sydney's exchange argued strongly for a computerised national exchange to win back trading in major listed companies that was increasingly moving to London and New York.¹⁴⁰ In 1984 the Brisbane exchange historian predicted that improvements in computer systems could lead to centralisation of share transfers and information on companies in one location in Australia but did not think this likely for another decade.¹⁴¹ Only four years later his Sydney counterparts recorded the end of local exchanges when the Sydney exchange was formally merged with the other five Australian Associated Stock Exchanges into the Australian Stock Exchange in 1987.¹⁴²

2. Building and remaking the city centre

2.1 *Development and redevelopment phases*

One of the dynamics shaping the Australian economy overall as well as the capital cities has been the 'rapid regeneration of CBDs forming an important part of the asset underpinning of the banking and insurance sector'.¹⁴³ The larger the city grows the higher its land values, the bigger the profits to be made and the faster its redevelopment. With increasing competition for space only those activities which gained large benefits or great profits from city centre development would locate in the centre and, in response to rising prices, in high-density buildings.¹⁴⁴ For these reasons, high-rise office blocks have come to dominate most city centres and to extend their domain by colonising 'frame' districts. More than any other sector, offices have changed the shape and size of the city centre since World War II.

This redevelopment did not begin in 1945 because the Commonwealth's *Building Materials Act* gave priority in the use of scarce building materials to the construction of suburban homes. Controls on non-residential building were not

¹³⁹ Salsbury and Sweeney, pp 387-388, 428; Lougheed, p 182.

¹⁴⁰ Salsbury and Sweeney, pp 427-428, 448-452.

¹⁴¹ Lougheed, p 174.

¹⁴² Salsbury and Sweeney, p 452.

¹⁴³ Lepani et al, p 33.

¹⁴⁴ See Neutze, *Urban development in Australia*, p 96.

lifted until 1953. This meant that the first phase in the centre's post-war history was an artificially-prolonged period of stasis. This was reflected in the mixture of land uses and low-key city life in every capital. In central Hobart in 1954 most buildings were houses and shops as they had been for a century. Offices, factories and public buildings had greatly increased during that time but represented less than 14 per cent of central 'functional units', compared to the 78 per cent share of houses and shops.¹⁴⁵ Until the late 1950s even Sydney was still highly centralised with offices, port facilities and higher-order retailing in the centre and workers' homes and industry concentrated in the inner suburbs to the south and west. Moored ships could be seen from Sussex and Kent Streets, their superstructures 'all of a piece with the outlines of narrow Victorian office buildings...'¹⁴⁶

Much pre-war heritage, even colonial heritage, survived in every city centre until the 1960s. In his 1968 survey the City Engineer noted that Hobart's CBD had not developed a 'comprehensive high density core'. Blocks with the greatest coverage of buildings were isolated from each other and had the many divergent uses - jam factory, government office, shops - typical of old city centres.¹⁴⁷ Some pre-war precincts survive in Hobart and elsewhere in government ownership or in 'frame' districts, as in Adelaide's south east corner and North Adelaide.

In Darwin, Commonwealth controls of a different kind delayed private redevelopment. The Departments of Postwar Reconstruction and the Interior planned to remake the bomb-shattered town into 'a city of striking tropical architecture', and in 1946 the Commonwealth compulsorily acquired all freehold land in and near central Darwin. The expensive plan was not implemented and was soon abandoned but private building was restricted until as late as 1971 when conversion of urban leases to freehold, first permitted only in 1962, was simplified.¹⁴⁸ In every other capital, the transformation of the city centre started in the mid-1950s, after Commonwealth controls were lifted and when 'fifteen years of virtual stagnation in civil investment through the depression and war had rendered it ripe for change'.¹⁴⁹

From the late 1950s 'Sydney was radically rebuilt upwards in a sudden spring of affluence ...'.¹⁵⁰ Change became central Sydney's main characteristic and the city 'opened new petals of aluminium and glass like one of those time-lapse flowers that take only a few seconds to bloom'.¹⁵¹ Melbourne's skyline, its 'spatial

145 Solomon, p 321.

146 R Creswell, 'The sea, the sea', in D Modjeska, ed, *Inner cities: Australian women's memory of place*, Penguin Books, Victoria, 1989, pp 162, 163, 167.

147 City of Hobart, p 9

148 SA King, 'More than meets the eye: plans for land use change in Darwin after Cyclone Tracy', in HH Aschmann and SA King, *Two Northern Territory urban studies*, North Australia Research Bulletin no 5, North Australia Research Unit, ANU, Darwin 1979, pp 60-62.

149 H Wardlaw, 'RDL Fraser: his contribution to the planning of Sydney', in R Freestone, ed *The Australian planner*, Proceedings of Planning History conference, University of NSW, Sydney 1993, p 159.

150 S Dermody, 'Private transports', in Modjeska, p 44.

151 (Both quotations) G Souter and G Molnar, *Sydney observed*, Angus and Robertson.

configuration'¹⁵² and the 'colourful mix of forms and functions in the nineteenth-century town'¹⁵³ were also radically transformed between 1956 and 1975. The change was most pronounced at the heart of the financial district near Collins Street where land values soared and, as land taxes were tied to the unimproved capital value, redevelopment was inevitable. The old urban mix 'gave way to the high-rise uniformity of the corporate bureaucracies in the 1960s.' Most of Australia's largest companies - including BHP, Shell, ICI, GMH, Ansett - and its leading financiers moved to the city centre.¹⁵⁴ Even in the early 1960s offices comprised more than 40 per cent of Melbourne city addresses. In the 1970s the trend accelerated as the office zone expanded upwards, beyond the existing council height limit, and outwards to invade wholesaling, light industrial and professional districts.¹⁵⁵

Change came more slowly in other capitals but the mining boom affected nearly every city. Melbourne was the headquarters of national mining companies but the boom had the most pronounced effect on Darwin, Brisbane and Perth as they were smaller cities and closest to the mines. Heightened economic activity soon redefined their city centres which were further changed by government activity. 'Darwin sloughed off its makeshift air when the government pledged to build a new powerhouse, a high school and new government offices.'¹⁵⁶ However, although there are no height or other built form controls on city buildings, there are still few tall buildings in central Darwin and the predominant impression is of a low-rise, low-density city fringed by foreshore and botanic gardens.¹⁵⁷ In comparison, during the massive industrial and commercial development of WA from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, Perth's 'old and familiar landmarks were torn down and replaced by skyscraper blocks'.¹⁵⁸

Australia's boom in city office construction halted temporarily in the late 1970s, leading to an over-supply in office space. But shops, theatres, restaurants and other 'sociable activities' continued seeping away to the suburbs. In 1973, Melbourne City Council commissioned a Strategy Plan which stated 'a need to balance the economic advantages of compactness and the old social values of variety and accessibility'. The planners concluded that the future City of Melbourne should enable people to experience variety and contrast. 'But profits, rather than people, have always had most influence on the city's townscape. Business created the

Sydney, 1965, 1968, p 57.

¹⁵² Lewis, p 136.

¹⁵³ Davison, in Davison, *Melbourne on foot*, pp 21-22.

¹⁵⁴ D Dunstan, in Davison, *Melbourne on foot*, p 43.

¹⁵⁵ Davison, in Davison, pp 21-22

¹⁵⁶ Donovan, *At the other end of Australia*, p 219.

¹⁵⁷ Darwin Design group, 'Future directions for Darwin, Summary report', Darwin 1990, pp 8-9. (NARU Library, Darwin.)

¹⁵⁸ CT Stannage, *The people of Perth. A social history of Western Australia's capital city*, Perth City Council 1979, p 344.

social contrasts of the nineteenth century town and bigger business is steadily obliterating them in the twentieth century.'¹⁵⁹

There was another frenzied spate of office building in the late 1980s, but more highly concentrated in Sydney, as a global gateway city. In one decade (1970-79) more office space was built in central Sydney than was built between 1850 and 1969. That total doubled again between 1980 and 1992.¹⁶⁰ In most years between 1987 and 1992 around 40 per cent of all office construction in Australia was located in Sydney. Office construction was also high in Melbourne, ranging from around 25 per cent to 35 per cent. Less than one per cent of national office construction in each year was located in Hobart.¹⁶¹ Hobart is insulated from the mainland's extremes of boom-bust cycle. By contrast the history of Perth is 'a history of discontinuity' as WA has started afresh with each new wave of settlers and mining discoveries. This discontinuity is reflected in its architecture. St George's Terrace is 'the physical expression of the same theme'.¹⁶²

The towers which replaced older buildings are themselves 'evocative of an age'. This group demonstrates anew contemporary design principles and construction techniques, taking advantage of new technologies and changing height regulations. They also represent the leading firms of the post-war period.¹⁶³ The physical impact of business was not a matter of simply 'building upwards and outwards'. Even within the 'CBD' there is a spatial arrangement of business with corporate offices as precisely placed as red gums along a creek bed. This analogy is most apt in Perth's core business district which has kept its location between the railway and Swan River, with office developers still strongly favouring a St George's Terrace address.¹⁶⁴ The dramatic big city image in postcards of central Perth, photographed from across the Swan River, is in reality a view of tower development ranged in a line along the high ground of the terrace, much of it only one building deep.

All informants in this study readily identified specific business precincts and where these were shifting: nowhere is this a matter of corporate business 'invading' the whole surrounding central city. In Adelaide, the AMP tower, completed in 1968, now marks the gateway to a cross-shaped high-rise business district oriented to King William Street and Grenfell-Currie Streets. The continuation of high-rise development southwards around Victoria Square is mainly government offices which have traditionally located there. Two post-war high-rise examples are the Commonwealth's Reserve Bank next to the State Administration

¹⁵⁹ Davison, in Davison, pp 21-22.

¹⁶⁰ G Meagher, 'Hearts and minds: theorising change in the city centre', *Postmodern Cities Conference Proceedings*, Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Sydney, Sydney, 1993, p 381.

¹⁶¹ K O'Connor and RJ Stimson *The economic role of cities: economic change and city development Australia 1971-1991*, AGPS Canberra 1995, pp 33, 35 (fig 3.3).

¹⁶² G Seddon, quoted in C Polizzoto, 'Reading the city', *Fremantle Arts Review* vol 2, no 1, January 1987.

¹⁶³ See B McDonald and W Thorp *Review of heritage inventory for central Sydney* stage 1, Sydney 1995, p 8.

¹⁶⁴ Information from Ian Alexander, Perth, 1995.

Building. Viewed from Mt Lofty, the visual impression of central Adelaide is one of a neat pyramid set in a jumble of smaller building blocks, delineated in turn by spacious parkland surrounded by a wide suburban plain.

In Sydney, from the 1950s the northern edge of the city near Circular Quay drew office developers as the port site was occupied by obsolescent warehouses and housing and its steep slopes could be exploited to circumvent height limits measured from the rear lanes.¹⁶⁵ By constructing towers to face the harbour, the builders reoriented the central city towards views of the water long obscured by warehousing. Central Sydney's high-rise business district is still concentrated at the northern end. 'High-rise developers perceive the CBD quite rigidly and have very little interest in the area south of Martin Place.'¹⁶⁶ However, there is no longer a single CBD in Sydney or Melbourne. Unlike the other capitals, high-rise construction after the war extended well beyond the old CBDs. In Melbourne the main extension was along St Kilda Road, encouraged by city council zoning. In Sydney developers crossed the harbour to Milsons Point and North Sydney. Skyscrapers jostle for space on each side of the harbour, creating a strong visual impression of twin cities linked by the arch of the Harbour Bridge.

The first phase in post-war office-building was marked by height and the extension of business precincts. In the second phase from the late 1960s skyscrapers also became land-eaters. Building taller was one option for increasing saleable office space: the other was building wide. This was a more complicated matter than finding finance and the right building techniques as it involved purchasing and amalgamating adjacent properties into one large redevelopment site. Amalgamation also meant that demolitions increased and this even included earlier post-war buildings such as the ANZ and Commonwealth Banks in Perth.¹⁶⁷ Just as Civil & Civic had signalled the dramatic change to Sydney's vertical scale with Caltex House, in 1961 it developed a proposal for a complex which would, in its final form, occupy half a hectare between Pitt and George Streets.¹⁶⁸ Lend Lease described its proposal as 'urban renewal' but since the opening of Australia Square in 1968 the radical design of the two buildings and plaza by Harry Seidler, particularly the 50-storey round tower, has focused attention on the outstanding architecture alone.¹⁶⁹

Lend Lease's original emphasis on the scheme's urban implications is equally as significant as Seidler's design. Australia Square represented a complete departure from the past in the way that an entire precinct was replaced by structures of far greater mass and height. The change was not simply that of scale, although that trend would cause increasing disquiet. By combining long-established plots and closing streets such procedures obliterated street and block patterns dating from the foundation years. 'This building pattern can erase much of the character and

¹⁶⁵ Taylor, 'Multistoried office buildings', p 4.

¹⁶⁶ Information from Tony Prescott, Sydney, 1996.

¹⁶⁷ Information from Ian Kelly, Perth, 1995.

¹⁶⁸ Murphy, pp 80-82.

¹⁶⁹ Wording of Civic Award presented by NSW Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects in 1967, in Murphy, p 117.

interest of Melbourne, turn important activity areas into service areas, and destroy a circulation system which evolved in part to accommodate pedestrian needs which have not changed.'¹⁷⁰ The existing medium-to-large rectangular blocks in most of the capitals themselves invited 'the creation of large scale, superblock fabrics which are incompatible with traditional urban fabrics'.¹⁷¹ Provision of plazas such as Australia Square did not compensate for the varied pedestrian roles of the old streets. The new complexes combined offices with other city centre functions, but internalised them.¹⁷²

Suburbanisation also represents a theme of major significance to city centres. Despite a long history of suburbanisation it was not until the 1950s that the traditional close links between centre and suburbs began to dissolve as new suburbs were built well beyond the centre and its web of radial public transport routes. Melbourne's metropolitan area within 10 miles radius from the GPO in 1911 contained around 260 square miles and 310 square miles by 1947. By contrast with that gradual expansion the metropolitan area more than doubled between 1947 and 1954 and increased again to 812 square miles by 1961.¹⁷³ Sydney's built-up area expanded from around 400 square kilometres in 1945 to nearly 1200 square kilometres in 1981.¹⁷⁴ A map of the phases of metropolitan development of Sydney shows suburbs surging far to the north, west and south of the city centre after 1941.¹⁷⁵ Yet such maps also show how oriented the metropolitan area remains to the city centre. For example, in Brisbane the suburban centres of the early twentieth century and post-war centres form two concentric rings around central Brisbane.

As city centre functions such as retailing and manufacturing were moved to suburban locations, financial services and public administration extended the CBDs, partly as a consequence of rapid metropolitan growth.¹⁷⁶ Thus post-war suburbanisation had both positive and negative effects on the city centre. Suburban populations increased demand for government and professional services and entertainment, promoting the growth of office blocks, hotels and cultural centres but also hastening the decline of retailing and residential use and destroying, along with old buildings, an urban identity constructed over the previous century.

2.2 City planning and regulation

Urban historians have noted that the same global technological changes have been responded to differently in individual cities, resulting in different images and

¹⁷⁰ *Grids and greenery*, Urban Design & Architecture Division, City of Melbourne, 1987, p 56.

¹⁷¹ Siksna, p 13.

¹⁷² Taylor discusses this process in some detail, for example for Allendale Square, Perth, and Collins Place. See Taylor *Australian architecture since 1960*, pp 58, 60, 61.

¹⁷³ Pryor, p 121.

¹⁷⁴ D Rich et al, in RV Cardew et al, p 20.

¹⁷⁵ See DN Jeans and Peter Spearritt, *The open-air museum: the cultural landscape of New South Wales*, George Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1980, p 105 (map).

¹⁷⁶ See K O'Connor and E Blakely, 'Suburbia makes the central city: a new interpretation of city suburb relationships', *Urban policy and research* 7, 3 September 1989.

cultures. One suggestion is that this difference is due to political differences. The timing, form and extent of city planning is one important example. Partly due to differences between the States in planning regulation, the impact of the high-rise office block has taken very different forms and heights in each city and has occupied different territories. Many of the design features of high-rise offices are also due not so much to architecture as to specific height limits and, later, plot ratios set by councils.

In Melbourne in 1889 when the 12-storey Australian Provincial Life Insurance Building was opened, an official party in the hydraulic lift shot straight to the top and was jerked back by recoil springs. This small drama persuaded the city council to impose a 40-metre height limit on buildings, which remained in force until ICI House was constructed in 1956-58. The tower soared to 70 metres, twice the height of the old limit. Osborn McCutcheon also made innovative use of concrete and sheer glazed curtain walls, 'setting off the city's second office boom and the redefinition of its skyline'.¹⁷⁷

As other developers found ways to exceed height controls, councils responded by substituting less restrictive forms of control. Plot ratio provisions established a permissible ratio of floor space to land area for various parts of the city.¹⁷⁸ They continued to limit the total floor space in proportion to the area of the site but allowed more flexibility in design and height. In Melbourne, both the Century Building, 13 floors, built to the old 40 metre limit, and Nauru House, 52 floors, and covering only a quarter of the site, have plot ratios of about 12:1.¹⁷⁹ Plot ratio and other regulatory constraints, together with clients' desire for height and for specific addresses, have increasingly set the parameters for architectural design. Perth's towers can be clearly dated by their heights, which seemed to increase in one hundred per cent leaps decade by decade, from the 10-12 storeys of the MLC building and Council House in the 1950s and 1960s to the 50 storey Bond Tower in the 1980s. Many developers started projects on the assumption that they could get raised height limits or new plot ratios before their project was completed: Bond succeeded in doing so, in Perth. The QV1 building of the 1990s achieved 40 storeys, albeit an 'odd shape' because it was not allowed to interfere with sight lines from the parliamentary precinct.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ *Historic Buildings Council Register*, Department of Planning and Development, Melbourne 1993, p 29. For similar developments in Sydney see Fraser, pp 226-227, 235, 236, 238.

¹⁷⁸ In Britain, Holford's original concept was labelled 'floor space index'. That was the amount of floor space in the building compared with the plot on which it stood, and half the adjoining street, so that if the street was narrow the floor space index was lower and so the building was lower than allowed on a wide street. But when Holford prepared the City of London Plan, councillors, lobbied by developers, left out consideration of the width of the adjoining street and changed the index to a comparison between the site area and the whole floor area, and it was called plot ratio. This method of measuring density in big buildings was soon adopted worldwide. Stephenson interview, tape 7, p 84.

¹⁷⁹ *Grids and greenery*, p 58.

¹⁸⁰ Information from Ian Kelly, 1995.

Mt Newman House (1971) introduced the method in Perth of amalgamating lots to enable permissible plot ratio to be concentrated into a free-standing tower block. This method was also used for the three tallest buildings of the mining boom, Allendale Square, the AMP and St Martins, each exceeding 140 metres.¹⁸¹ Reduced coverage of the site reflected city planners' concern to provide light, air and public space at street level and was enshrined by councils in a further requirement for set-back from the boundaries. These provisions had the opposite effect to height controls as, instead of building right to the street frontage to gain as much floor space as possible for modest towers, builders moved them back from the street and squeezed in extra floor space by stacking them as high as the plot ratio would allow. This practice soon had a discernible impact on the physical and social heritage of the city as it broke down the formal definition of the streets, removed shopfronts and detailed building facades and created cold, windy microclimates which discouraged pedestrian use.¹⁸² Melbourne City Council, flushed with civic pride, gave site ratio bonuses to get BHP House aloft in 1972 but office-workers found its spaces intimidating, and architects disputed the decision to award it a 1975 architectural prize.¹⁸³

Development phases which had such pronounced effect on the city centres reflected not only the rise and fall of company fortunes in response to investment and speculative opportunities, and the impact of federal fiscal policies but also the interplay between private development and government regulation. Indeed, David Harvey has emphasised in his work on western cities the ways in which government and planners have tried to resolve capitalism's crises by 'spatial fixes', using geographical policies and controls.¹⁸⁴

Initially, State and local government policy treated the whole city centre as a business zone with little restriction placed on construction of office blocks or the displacement of housing and open space by warehouses and small factories. Height and other building characteristics were controlled by building regulations but 'virtually any activity which was likely to choose to locate in the Central Area was permitted to do so.' As a result, the stock of buildings and the pattern of land uses which existed by the early 1960s represented 'almost a purely market controlled allocation of space and intensity of site use'. Such controls as existed simply rationalised the logic of the market, 'tidying up' rather than influencing the pattern of city centre activities. This remained true even after the introduction of new development controls (for example, in Melbourne and Brisbane in the mid-1960s).¹⁸⁵

By 1975 more powerful planning strategies had been produced for city councils in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. 'The plans set out objectives for future city

181 I Hocking, 'Perth - the building challenge', Perth, c 1987, p 24. Battye Library.

182 *Grids and greenery*, p 58.

183 Davison, in Davison, p 31.

184 JB McLoughlin, *Shaping Melbourne's future? Town planning, the state and civil society*, CUP, Melbourne 1992, chapter 21

185 John Paterson Urban Systems Pty Ltd, 'The Melbourne central business district in the 1960s', AIUS Research Project 33, Canberra [c 1972] p 52.

development...and...offered some hope of more decisive planning in city centres where the forces of capital had otherwise had a relatively free rein'.¹⁸⁶ The consensus seems to be, however, that the power of property and finance capital remained paramount, at least in Melbourne and Sydney, and that planners failed to control either the content or the form of their city centres.¹⁸⁷ McLoughlin argues that land-use planning in Melbourne has been highly reactive to wider capitalist developments rather than directive of them, for example, in the 1980s when the Labor government responded to deepening recession by using planning policies to maintain the primacy and property values of the central business district.¹⁸⁸

Central Perth took until 1986 to get a statutory planning scheme and a strategic plan, more than 30 years after Stephenson and Hepburn had proposed development control in the metropolitan plan. In the interim, planning in Perth was a matter of conflict and procrastination while finance capital, in partnership with government, proved its power by unrestrained office construction. The diversity of uses and places in Perth declined as small merchants closed shop in the face of reduced sales and rising rents and the city centre's architectural heritage was systematically destroyed. Alexander predicted that central Perth would be 'left as a sterile area composed of office towers, international hotels and an increasing array of empty shops'.¹⁸⁹

Differences in government regulation have contributed to differences in the shape and extent of city centre functions. Local government zoning has had a strong influence. Alexander presents a series of maps comparing the functional zoning in the central areas of Perth, Adelaide and Hobart around 1970.¹⁹⁰ These demonstrate considerable differences in the extent of the city centre zoned for different purposes, for instance the greater proportion of councils have allowed for residential use in Adelaide and Hobart than in Perth.

Statutory planning rates highly as a theme in Darwin's post-war history but not in its heritage. Yet this was the one place where a new capital or at least a new city centre might have been created. The near-destruction of Darwin in 1942 and again in 1974 was recognised by Commonwealth planners as an opportunity to build a new city. On both occasions the Commonwealth adopted measures to freeze private development and prepare elaborate plans. Yet the old town centre survived and few planning proposals were implemented. Thus by the 1970s the city centre was distant from most of the suburban population and physically isolated by the peninsula-airport-suburbs split. Planners had failed to accommodate prior historical development and residents' preferences, and failed to take into account other influences, not least those of government activity itself.

Such failures also limited the effect of other city plans. Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works produced a master plan for Melbourne in 1953, the

¹⁸⁶ I Alexander, 'Does central Perth have a future?' *Urban policy and research* vol 3 no 2, 1986, p 17.

¹⁸⁷ For example, see Mc Loughlin, chapter 21.

¹⁸⁸ Mc Loughlin, p 232.

¹⁸⁹ Alexander, 'Does central Perth have a future?' p 23.

¹⁹⁰ Alexander, *The city centre*.

chief planner EF Borrie aiming for a flexible plan which followed trends rather than led them.¹⁹¹ However, his 'admiration for American cities led him to accept rather earlier than many that the car would have to be accommodated and that this would radically alter the design and shape of the city'. He proposed 'razing virtually everything in the area bounded by Spring, Collins, Elizabeth and Swanston Streets' for a new 'civic centre', portrayed as a square surrounded by monumental government office blocks. A ring road would also 'sweep up under Spring Street and link up with a network of radiating freeways.'¹⁹²

Nearly every contemporary metropolitan plan proposed similar destruction of inner suburbs to bring freeway traffic into the centre, and destruction of the centre to build offices, carparks and civic complexes to serve the suburbs. The City of Hobart Plan (1945) proposed but did not implement a transformation of the city with working-class Wapping, presented as an 'opportunity for replanning'. Less dramatically, but just as inexorably, the old wharf district has since been obliterated.¹⁹³ In 1949 the whole of central Adelaide was proposed as a commercial and industrial area, leaving only North Adelaide residential, but with a north-south highway built across it. North Adelaide residents vehemently opposed similar freeway proposals made later under the Metropolitan Adelaide Transportation (MATs) Plan, including Hugh Stretton whose book *Ideas for Australian cities* greatly influenced planners in the 1970s.¹⁹⁴

Other planning proposals were also downgraded or delayed. Even such popular and pragmatic plans as the MMBW plan depended on finance for public works.¹⁹⁵ On this difficulty hinged the salvation of inner suburbs blighted for years by freeway proposals and central precincts earmarked for redevelopment. But the threats to the centre mooted in the big plans were almost as marked in effect on the city's heritage as the plans which were implemented. In central Perth, blighted houses in Northbridge and East Perth for many years attested to the effect of their acquisition for a City Northern Bypass. More positively, public reaction to 'urban renewal' proposals revealed much about what people valued in their city centres and contributed to a wider appreciation for Australia's urban heritage.¹⁹⁶

City centres are highly vulnerable to manipulation of planning controls in favour of redevelopment. Big metropolitan plans pose one kind of threat but abandonment of statutory planning poses others. Since the 1980s State governments have adopted a 'market-driven' approach to planning. What kinds of development will result? Governments are also withdrawing from direct provision of services such as public transport and telecommunications. Can the private sector deliver what

191 C Rasmussen C and T Dingle 'EF Borrie and Melbourne's 1954 master plan', in Freestone, ed, *The Australian planner* pp 131-132.

192 Rasmussen and Dingle, p 132 (also illustration for Civic Centre, figure 1, p 134).

193 Wapping History group, 'Down Wapping'. *Hobart's vanished Wapping and Old Wharf districts*, Blubber Head Press, Sandy Bay, Tasmania, 1998, 1994, pp 214 (first quotation), 217.

194 P Sumerling, 'Playford and "progress" in the City of Adelaide', manuscript loaned by author [pp 16, 18].

195 See Dingle and Rasmussen, *Vital connections*, pp 243, 255.

196 This observation is based on Dingle and Rasmussen, p 257.

people need in their cities and will the social costs of these changes fall most heavily on those who can least afford them? The effects of privatisation will be manifest in new urban places as well as in the impact on historical sites and in the heritage of city centres as places of social and cultural as well as economic exchange.

2.3 *Architecture, engineering and construction*¹⁹⁷

Melbourne was the 'capital' of modern architecture between 1935 and 1960 when modernists Roy Grounds, Frederick Romberg and Robin Boyd were the 'undoubted focus'.¹⁹⁸ The three, in partnership between 1953 and 1961, were highly influential architects, particularly in promoting European 'functional' architecture and the 'International' style. Romberg's projects also referred to the Brutalist movement developing overseas, which was expressed in hard shapes, modular frames, exposed utilities and raw concrete, and which later gained wide currency in Australia. However, few of their buildings were large city centre structures.¹⁹⁹ By the 1960s they were no longer regarded as leaders. 'Smartness, the pursuit of structural virtuosity, the aim of building a taller skyscraper than the latest one in Sydney, became the aim of many clients and architects.' The initiative moved to Sydney where architects such as Wooley and Seidler had emerged. Boyd himself became one of Seidler's most influential and widely-read publicists.²⁰⁰

The 'American' theme, highly visible in the office towers of the post-war city centre, became more apparent in this shift of leadership to Sydney. From the 1950s the USA was by far the strongest overseas influence on the architecture of the Australian capitals. Central Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth are showcases for work by architects such as Harry Seidler, who studied or worked in North America with Walter Gropius, Josef Albers, Marcel Breuer and Oscar Niemeyer (in Brazil) and introduced their concepts into Australia after his arrival in 1948.²⁰¹ Seidler's work and his influence on other Australian architects was that of an 'Internationalist'. What this term means is that Seidler's 'architecture is East Coast modern, the American version of the Bauhaus idea restated by Breuer, which is identified more with the USA than it is with Australia.'²⁰² These influences on Seidler's architecture were augmented by his collaboration with the engineer Pier Luigi Nervi in Rome, lasting from 1963 with the design of Australia Tower to Nervi's death in 1979. Seidler's public work became characterised by curvilinear mass forms which, with Nervi's contribution, also pioneered new engineering methods in Australia. Permanent precast concrete formwork was first used in

¹⁹⁷ Taylor's books and report, cited elsewhere, are a major source for this theme, and I have not reproduced them here. See also Lewis' sections on building and architecture and streetscape in *Melbourne*, pp 135-139.

¹⁹⁸ C Hamann, in H Tanner, ed, *Architects of Australia*, Macmillan, Sth Melbourne 1981, p 129.

¹⁹⁹ Hamann, pp 129, 134, 138 (quotation).

²⁰⁰ Hamann, pp 134, 139 (quotation).

²⁰¹ J Taylor, *Australian architecture since 1960*, Law Book Company, NSW 1986, p 15.

²⁰² P Drew, in K Frampton and P Drew, *Harry Seidler: four decades of architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London 1992, p 15.

Australia Tower and the MLC Centre in Sydney was the highest concrete structure in the world on completion in 1978.²⁰³

Unlike Australian planners, who continued to favour England, post-war architects studied in or visited the USA. Increasing levels of investment in Australian property and finance by American firms also meant that they often engaged American architects rather than Australian firms, or American architects were brought out to work with them. American technology and 'know-how' was also influential. From the late 1950s, as managing directors argued at the time, 'advances in elevator technology, the development of new building materials and sophisticated building techniques, combined with the pressing demand for office accommodation in an affluent and expansive era, meant that city buildings would inevitably go higher'.²⁰⁴

The ICI building which set off Melbourne's second office boom was the city's first International Style high-rise.²⁰⁵ American-style CBDs effaced idiomatically Australian cityscapes. In Melbourne in 1969, the grand old Menzies Hotel was demolished to make way for the 'black ice of BHP House (1972)'. Like the nearby Shell House (1960) and AMP Square (1969) this 41 storey building was 'created in the glass and steel image of corporate America by Australian architects working in consultation with the leading American architects Skidmore, Owings and Merrill'.²⁰⁶

The other important point to make about this modernist architecture is that most of it is post-war, unlike the American and European originals to which Australian architecture deferred. The world's first skyscraper was built in Chicago in 1885 and New York's first skyscraper was constructed in 1902, where just 11 years later the Woolworth Building reached 60 storeys.²⁰⁷ Designers of the high-rise Dumas House in Perth (1966) borrowed its concept from the Reichsbank project of 1933. Sydney Opera House was begun soon afterwards, 'further contributing to the obsolescence of the universal gargantuan box'.²⁰⁸ 'The *certainty* of these heroic Perth slabs becomes the uncertainty of both the copy and of the new.' This uncertainty in the architecture of the post-war city was most evident in the smaller State capitals, where high-rise was adopted more slowly than in Sydney and Melbourne and attempted with less flair (and often with less money).

The copy suffers from being too late. In the case of these late modern buildings, acutely so, for in the great Western Australian fear of being *behind*, they are ... the last of a kind. As architectural modernism seemed to emerge at full strength and purity here, elsewhere the orthodoxy was losing ground.²⁰⁹

203 K Frampton, in Frampton and Drew, pp 86-87, 88.

204 Murphy, p 80.

205 Davison, in Davison, p 34.

206 Davison, in Davison, p 31.

207 *The city as an economic system*, Open University Press, Bucks, UK, 1973, p 95.

208 G Crist, 'ReSetting a city: three modern buildings and the uncertainty of place', M Arch thesis, University of WA, Nedlands, 1993 (UWA Library, Scholars Centre, p 63.

209 Crist, p 62 (both quotations).

Similar sentiments were expressed about Adelaide's modernist buildings. 'Rarely...did functional efficiency and expediency produce designs of superior merit. Two notable exceptions are the Reserve Bank building in Victoria Square and the Australian Eagle Insurance Building in Grenfell Street.'²¹⁰ As for the 'glass towers' of the 1980s and 1990s, even Seidler's sunbreaker facades were based on Le Corbusier's *panne de verre* designs of the 1930s for Algiers, which he soon abandoned.²¹¹ Advances in manufacturing technology in steel and concrete, mainly in the USA, were also adopted some time later in Australia. One notable exception was the steel frame MLC building (1957) in Adelaide which was similar to Lever House in New York, built only three years earlier.²¹² Soon afterwards, however, unlike in America, concrete frame construction replaced steel in Australia, often combined with high-strength steel strand. 'The multiple arch structure of the Sydney Opera House, concrete domes of various configurations and elegant large span, arch bridges and tall buildings such as the MLC Centre in Sydney illustrate the flexibility of this material.'²¹³

Underlying more recent technological advances has been the development of computer technology which has enabled engineers to carry out complex analyses very rapidly: for example it took an engineer a year to complete an approximate structural analysis of the Australia Square Building; ten years later, after engineers spent a few days preparing the data set, a computer took 43 seconds to develop a precise analysis for the MLC Centre. What this means is that the size, architectural form and structural solutions of new city buildings, especially special-purpose buildings are already more varied than in the past.²¹⁴

The skills demanded by large-scale building construction promoted the development of engineering and architectural firms specialising in high-rise, interior decoration and landscape design. Sydney- and Melbourne-based firms built national practices and two or three local firms grew and predominated in the smaller capitals. In the early post-war period all the important buildings in Perth were done by Sydney and Melbourne architects or by the principal architect of Public Works.²¹⁵ Bates, Smart & McCutcheon of Melbourne designed the MLC buildings in Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Hobart and North Sydney and the ICI buildings erected in Melbourne and Sydney between 1955 and 1958. In Brisbane, the MLC Assurance Building was designed in association with Conrad & Gargett.²¹⁶ Bren Gargett joined Arnold Conrad's firm in 1939 and they developed one of Queensland's largest architectural practices. An aerial photo of central Brisbane in 1988 shows more than half of the big buildings marked as Conrad & Gargett

²¹⁰ Marsden, Stark and Sumerling, pp 43-44.

²¹¹ Stephenson interview, tape 19, p 216.

²¹² Information from Paul Stark, 1997.

²¹³ M Marosszeky, 'Construction technology and urban development', in Troy, *Technological change*, p 117.

²¹⁴ Marosszeky, pp 119-120.

²¹⁵ Stephenson interview, tape 10, pp 126, 127.

²¹⁶ Marsden, Stark and Sumerling, pp 44, 174; Taylor and Stewart, pp 1-5, 10, 13; 2-2, 5; RAIA SA, 'Significant 20th century architecture'.

projects. The 24 buildings, include the ANZ, National and Commonwealth Banks, Santos House, Sheraton Hotel, National Mutual, the State Executive Building, Central Station Development and Brisbane Administration Centre.²¹⁷

Half of these buildings were government commissions. Expanding government demand strongly influenced building and design professions by providing large contracts and training cohorts of builders, architects and engineers. The Snowy Mountains Scheme alone provided a training ground for a generation of engineers.²¹⁸ Australia has also enjoyed a 'long and unbroken history of government architects and government architecture'.²¹⁹ Each capital retains a large stock of colonial and twentieth century public buildings, some kept in original use and expensively restored and others 'recycled'. General post offices were highly visible examples, such as Adelaide's GPO (1872) where the elaborate postal hall was restored in association with Danvers Architects, re-opening in 1986.

The Commonwealth's Department of Works and Railways, established in 1916, continued in various guises until amalgamation with other services in the 1990s, a fate it shared with equivalent State departments. Until then, many city buildings were designed and constructed by the Commonwealth and State departments. Those built between the 1930s and the 1960s were mostly undistinguished as architects were limited by tight costs, high demand for serial construction throughout the country and bureaucratic restraints. 'Departmental architecture of the 1960s could be recognised by its safe and conventional design, precise brickwork, curtain walls...and the ubiquitous use of deep metal tray fascias.' More innovative work then became evident, and a change in attitudes brought a rise in restoration projects.²²⁰ Even in the 1960s some Commonwealth buildings were designed to showcase Australian timbers and craftsmanship: for example, inside the Reserve Bank building in Adelaide and in the former Supreme Court in Darwin.²²¹

The increasing diversity of government architecture also reflected a diversifying clientele. Ceres House built by the Commonwealth for the Australian Wheat Board in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, in 1987 was an office tower with high quality fittings and detailing of 'crisp functionalism' in keeping with its use in international negotiations.²²² The Commonwealth Bank was required to process architectural requirements through the Commonwealth until the 1960s.²²³ The bank building in Martin Place, Sydney, built as the NSW Government Savings Bank in 1928, was adopted as the Commonwealth Bank's international headquarters, a

217 *Architects of Australia*, Bicentennial edition, Images of Australia, Camberwell Victoria [1988], p 43.

218 Murphy, p 6.

219 R Pegrum, ed, *Australian architects: Australian government architects*, Commonwealth of Australia and Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Canberra 1988, p 7. For details of government building in Sydney see Coltheart and Maddrell, pp 13-14.

220 R Johnson, in Pegrum, p 95 (including quotation).

221 P Stark to S Marsden, 1996; Welke and Wilson, p 249..

222 Pegrum, p 64.

223 N Quarry, in Pegrum, p 14.

decision which made it in 1989 the largest conservation and refitting project undertaken by government architects and engineers.²²⁴

This project also illustrated a general trend. An increasing civic concern was reflected in the design of buildings which respected rather than challenged their surroundings, and in major restoration projects.²²⁵ The Telephone Exchange constructed by the Commonwealth in Charlotte Street Brisbane in 1989 had brick cladding at the lower levels and incorporated a brick warehouse dating from 1912.²²⁶ The exchange was one of a number of towers built in the capitals which retained old building facades and adopted complementary design features although critics on both sides of the heritage divide have condemned such projects as ‘facadism’.

Architects also had to adapt designs to an increasingly diverse range of requirements, including air-conditioning and telecommunications. For example, the Commonwealth’s new exchanges in Sydney (1988) and Brisbane satisfied functional criteria by reducing dust and light with minimal fenestration, restricting public access, using reinforced concrete structures and low-maintenance external materials, and providing ‘sophisticated reticulation of cabling and mechanical, electrical and fire services’.²²⁷

Another factor in design changes was due to changes in ownership. State and Commonwealth government policy on office accommodation has swung between owning and leasing buildings. Both policies have had great impact as governments both own and lease extensive areas of central office space. In the 1980s, in response to Commonwealth policy to increase owned accommodation, Australian Construction Services designed massive offices for Melbourne and Sydney.²²⁸ As the pendulum swung, as lessees, governments strongly influenced private building design by requiring specific office standards. These influenced all new office design in cities such as Hobart where government is the major renter. They also had the effect of downgrading historical (including early post-war buildings) available for lease in the city centre.

Changes in private ownership also had an impact on design. In the early post-war period many towers were built as premises for particular companies, but since the 1980s developers have built most offices for lease. The building’s design is its own best advertisement and it must also be flexible enough to accommodate any tenant. Hence, the advice of leasing agents on the most-popular and lucrative design features has assumed much greater importance than in the past.

2.4 Image-making

The dominant images of Sydney and Hobart are of deep harbours bounded by steep hills and the juxtaposition of port and town. Sydney’s image as a ‘harbour city’ is also an outcome of sustained image-making. The harbour has become ‘a

224 Pegrum, p 20.

225 See J Taylor, *Australian architecture since 1960*, pp 62-66.

226 Pegrum, p 48.

227 Pegrum, pp 48, 50 (quotation).

228 Pegrum, p 82.

cultural icon; a tourist site, a pleasure ground, a sports arena, a public amphitheater'. Sydney originally grew around the harbour because of its reliance on a functional port but by the beginning of the twentieth century, town planners were already 'placing the harbour at the cultural and symbolic centre of the city, rather than the geographical or economic centre' as industry was relocated from the city centre down the harbour and to Botany Bay and Newcastle.²²⁹

Image-making also hinged on the creation of icons. The Sydney Opera House, like the Harbour Bridge, became an essential landmark, as intended, 'each representing a substantial commitment of public funds for erecting a city monument as well as building for a specific purpose'.²³⁰ State and local governments have also boosted city centres by restoring heritage precincts as icons, the most famous of them Hobart's Battery Point and the Rocks in Sydney. Both localities draw their appeal from a romanticised harbour image. The transformation of other urban precincts, such as Melbourne's riverside, were more radical, and in the case of Sydney's current East Circular Quay development, more controversial.

Major events were recognised as playing a crucial role in the city's image and were used to physically improve city centres and promote or hasten new building projects. Key events used to boost civic improvements and attract new investment were: the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne; Queen Elizabeth's visit to all cities in 1954; the Empire Games in 1962 hosted by Perth; the Commonwealth games in 1982 and the 1988 Expo held in Brisbane²³¹; the 1988 Bicentenary, and Sydney's preparation for the 2000 Olympic Games. Two of Melbourne's most significant post-war structures were built for the Olympic Games: the Olympic Pool, and the Southern Cross Hotel, constructed as the first international-standard hotel with all the accoutrements.²³² Perth's Council House was opened for the Empire Games and the redevelopment of Sydney's Darling Harbour was funded largely as a bicentennial project. With these developments as models, all of the cities vied for major events. Other types of event (also with economic aims) were internally originated. The most important of them was the Adelaide Festival of Arts both because of its impact on Adelaide's image and economy and also because, as with other successful city-making enterprises, the other cities followed suit.

Historical commemorations were important, especially the 'sesquicentenaries' of British settlement celebrated in Perth (1979) and (in careful emulation) in Adelaide (1986). The Australian bicentenary (1988) was more extravagant in national impact because large sums of federal money were supplied. A third group of image-making events were recurring national or international events, such as the Grand Prix motor race, held from the 1980s. As in other forms of enterprise (new manufacturing in the 1960s, information technology-based business in the 1990s) there was strenuous

229 Sascha Jenkins, Sydney University <sascha.jenkins@pgrad.arts.su.edu.au> Re: History of Harbour Cities, H-NET Urban History Discussion List <H-URBAN@h-net.msu.edu> 16 Feb 1997.

230 Coltheart and Maddrell, p 74.

231 See Cole, pp 260-1, 371.

232 M Sheehan to S Marsden, 1996.

competition between capital cities, best exemplified by the ‘stealing’ of the Grand Prix from Adelaide by Melbourne.

New high-rise buildings were also erected as monuments. Two of the earliest post-war towers in central Perth were Council House and Dumas House, which was opened in 1966 as the first section of the State government offices adjacent to Parliament House. The government was ‘intent on producing civic monuments’, and the premier described Dumas House as a symbol of the State’s progress.

‘There is a sense of entering a new era, of resetting the city at a greater scale. More importantly, in these projects there is a discourse aimed at constituting civic space, in the ownership of the present, rather than *historical* space. These were perhaps the last such attempts on such a scale.’²³³

Skyscrapers carry a freight of meanings, both negative and positive. Nauru House in Melbourne is a prime example. For many people, the tall building represented further destruction of ‘gracious’ Collins Street (this is not mentioned in the Lend Lease history) but it also had great symbolic significance for newly-independent Nauru. ‘The building was planned to accommodate 4,000 to 5,000 people, more than the entire population of the island. It was not only intended as a commercial investment, but as a symbol of Nauru nationhood.’ The building was opened by Australia’s prime minister, attended by the President of Nauru and representatives of many Pacific nations.²³⁴

Skyscrapers are also highly-symbolic structures as deliberate expressions of corporate image or ambition, as well as of pragmatic concerns with profit and administration. MLC’s corporate brochure in the 1950s made clear that its choice of modernist high-rise office design was intended to brand the company as modern and progressive.²³⁵ ‘[B]efore the proliferation of electronic media provided alternative marketing mechanisms, a building was an important means of communicating the financial security and public benevolence of its owners.’ Hence, all aspects of their design were image-conscious: their massiveness, landscaping, public art, foyers and interior finishes; prestige areas for important company business, and facilities for staff relaxation.²³⁶ BHP House in Melbourne was designed to be a demonstration of Australian steel, as explained in the company’s brochure.

Sydney’s first concrete skyscraper, Caltex House, was built as a massive advertisement for Civil & Civic. Dusseldorp had searched for opportunities to enlarge operations from the Snowy Mountains, especially in Sydney. In 1954 he seized the chance ‘to demonstrate, very publicly, both the existence and efficiency of this new, unknown construction company’²³⁷ by taking over an option to build a 16-storey building in Kent Street near the abutment of the Harbour Bridge. The

²³³ Crist, p 32.

²³⁴ Murphy, p 153.

²³⁵ Information from P Stark, 1997.

²³⁶ Taylor report, ‘Interior’, p 1.

²³⁷ Murphy, p 17.

site was in a commanding position as a tall building would dominate a large surrounding area and be visible to motorists crossing the bridge.²³⁸

By comparison, companies are now divesting themselves of city property and taking up leases or moving readily from one tall building to the next. South Australia's major mining company SANTOS moved in the mid-1990s to Adelaide's tallest tower, the former State Bank building. Tenancy of office towers has become far more mobile and their design has become 'flexible', rather than unique. 'Gone are the days of having a signature design for one company', such as the MLC and the AMP.²³⁹

2.5 Reviving and preserving the centre

Heritage preservation is most evident in central Hobart mainly due to historical circumstances as no freeways were built nor was there large-scale redevelopment. Hobart's relative stagnation became a virtue once heritage tourism became popular. The 'historical' city centre is in this context as much a creation of post-war social and economic changes as the towering central business districts of Sydney and Melbourne.

Modernist architects and planners whose designs wreaked such radical change in the other city centres were often the first to formally list places threatened by those changes. Architects were prominent in establishing National Trusts and publishing books drawing attention to the loss of historical buildings.²⁴⁰ Beginning with NSW in 1947, National Trusts were voluntary bodies with little clout in the early years except in the work of amenable government planners and architects such as RDL Fraser, chief planner to the Cumberland County Council which prepared Sydney's metropolitan plan. Fraser broke new ground by providing for a register of places of scientific and historic interest.²⁴¹ Similar lists appeared in other plans, such as Clarke's *City of Adelaide Plan*, well before they were prepared under State heritage legislation.²⁴²

Planners and architects had contradictory effects on the heritage of the city centres. Edmund Wright House, an extravagant 1880s bank building, became 'an icon of Adelaide's architectural heritage' with the campaign to stop its demolition, the first popular heritage protest in the city. Dean Berry, president of the National Trust of SA, did not support the campaign as he favoured modernisation: but he was also one of the architects engaged to design the replacement office tower. The building was saved when the State government was moved to buy it in 1971.²⁴³

²³⁸ Murphy, pp 6, 16-17 (quotation).

²³⁹ P Stark to S Marsden.

²⁴⁰ For example, see M Casey et al, *Early Melbourne architecture 1840 to 1888*, OUP Melbourne 1953; EJR Morgan and SH Gilbert, *Early Adelaide architecture 1836 to 1886*, OUP Melbourne 1969.

²⁴¹ RDL Fraser was Deputy Chief, 1946-1952, and then Chief County Planner to the CCC 1952-1964, when it was replaced by the State Planning Authority. Wardlaw, pp 155, 156 (quotation), 161.

²⁴² Urban Systems Corporation, *The City of Adelaide Plan*, USC, Sydney 1974, prepared for the City of Adelaide. Work on compiling a heritage register for SA was started in 1979 under the Heritage Act of 1978.

²⁴³ Marsden, Stark and Sumerling, pp 32 (quotation), 45, 98; see also D Best, *Preserving*

From the late 1960s alliances were made between residents, heritage groups and unions in response to the shattering effect of the skyscraper boom and fast-breeding flats on familiar localities. In the 1970s Builders Labourers' Federation 'green bans' proved crucial in the campaign to prevent complete redevelopment of the Rocks. In 1973 the National Trust of Victoria won a broad-based campaign to save the 1890s chamber of the Commercial Bank from demolition.²⁴⁴

Given the significance of the movement to preserve the inner city (and the passions it has aroused) the movement's own heritage is worth preserving. There are some highly symbolic sites, such as the Rialto and Edmund Wright House. Some battles were lost - Bellevue Hotel in central Brisbane was demolished at night-time in 1979 - but such sites hold powerful associations and the loss prompted wider concern to save the city's heritage. From the mid-1970s Commonwealth, then State and local government enacted heritage legislation, beginning with the *Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975*. The Australian Heritage Commission compiled a Register of the National Estate which now includes many city centre places although it has a direct protective role only over actions proposed by Commonwealth agencies.²⁴⁵

3. Governing the city

3.1 *Extending the city-state*

Government administration has remained at the 'core' in the Australian capitals. Public administration was based in capital city centres from the start and its centralisation increased steadily from the late nineteenth century. The provision of services State-wide is perhaps the most important characteristic of the city centre, as it includes political, cultural and administrative as well as economic roles. After the war, this role of the centre was challenged by suburbanisation of retailing, manufacturing and professional services and by public housing and transport policies. Despite their contradictory effects, both the development of competing suburban centres and the intensification of central administration were actively encouraged by government. State agencies such as the South Australian Housing Trust built suburban shopping centres at new housing estates and in satellite settlements such as Elizabeth.²⁴⁶ Other departments and local councils promoted easier access to the city centre for car-dependent suburbanites by building freeways and carparks and widening central streets and intersections.

Some government services were 'decentralised' to new suburban centres, for example, from central Sydney to Parramatta. Less-often reported was the reinforcement of central functions by government. A recent study of the role of Australian cities in the global economy noted the historical constraints of an urban hierarchy in which 'as a federal political administrative system, Australia has eight

our heritage, Adelaide 1971.

²⁴⁴ Davison, in G Davison, ed, *Melbourne on foot*, p 33. Also, M Lewis to S Marsden.

²⁴⁵ M Pearson and S Sullivan, *Looking after heritage places*, Melbourne University Press, Victoria 1995, p 48. See this whole chapter for a discussion of all the relevant legislation, state by state and its implications.

²⁴⁶ S Marsden, *Business, charity and sentiment: the South Australian Housing Trust 1936-1986*, Wakefield Press, Adelaide, 1986

metropolitan cities which serve as centres of government administration, with attendant service agglomerations'.²⁴⁷

The concentration and numbers of government offices was increased by two phenomena: the huge expansion in Commonwealth revenue and powers, and the proliferation of State government responsibilities. The revival of central Darwin and Hobart was due almost entirely to this expansion. Broadening government responsibilities encompassed welfare, housing, education, culture, public transport and services. The forms of government also diversified to include corporations and regulatory bodies. A further contribution made by governments to city centre activity was through grants to non-government organisations, most of them operating from central premises. For example, between 1973 and 1986 more than 1000 Aboriginal-managed, government-funded enterprises and services were established in welfare, education and business, while governments themselves, churches and universities established others.²⁴⁸

Government was highly important in colonial Hobart yet there was a doubling of public buildings in the city centre between 1847 and 1954.²⁴⁹ 'It is noteworthy that locational stability has been a feature of most public functions; some have been duplicated, but few have moved from their initial sites.'²⁵⁰ The same applies to the other capitals except in Sydney where State administration, previously concentrated along the eastern boundary, has been dispersed through the city centre or 'decentralised' to suburban locations.²⁵¹

Efforts by State governments to increase local economic activity by promoting investment in the capital cities was a countervailing influence to that of federal policy and international investment which promoted the growth of Canberra and Sydney. State government policy encouraged interstate developers and engineering firms to set up subsidiary operations in their own States during the 1960s, which had important implications for city building.²⁵² Governments also used city centres directly as instruments of economic impetus, for example, by promoting their capital cities as tourist destinations. They funded arts festivals and sports events, constructed arts and entertainment complexes (always in near city-centre localities) and casinos. Wrest Point, the first legal casino in Australia, was opened in Hobart in 1973. In the 1990s such activities included Melbourne's Capital City Program and new casino, and Adelaide 21.

Commonwealth government activity has formed a higher proportion of total 'business' in the smaller capitals than in Sydney or Melbourne, further reinforcing their city-state character. 'Between them the Federal and State Governments and City of Perth own 49.6 per cent of the land and employ approximately one in eight

²⁴⁷ Lepani et al, p 28.

²⁴⁸ N Parbury, *Survival: a history of Aboriginal life in New South Wales*, NSW Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Sydney 1986, 1988, p 142.

²⁴⁹ Solomon, *Urbanisation*, pp 221-222, 324-325 (maps).

²⁵⁰ Solomon, *Urbanisation*, pp 323, 329.

²⁵¹ Meagher, p 374.

²⁵² D Stewart, 'The heavy engineering industry and engineering products', in Fraser, p 212.

of the CBD workforce'.²⁵³ McNeil estimates that up to two thirds of real estate in central Hobart is government occupied. The private sector is relatively small in Hobart and from the 1960s even the privately-built office towers were primarily leased to government.²⁵⁴ However, governments are withdrawing from provision of services. Can the private sector deliver what people need in their cities? The effects of privatisation will be manifest in new services and urban places and in the heritage of city centres as sites of social and cultural as well as economic exchange.

3.2 Federalism

Apart from attempts by Labor governments in the 1940s and the 1970s to create a direct role for the Commonwealth, State and local governments have retained major responsibility for the cities.²⁵⁵ Yet the Commonwealth has had an enormous impact on the post-war city centre, directly in the siting of its own offices and institutions, and indirectly through national programs and policies. Especially in the period to 1970, the rise of city businesses reflected the pivotal role of the Commonwealth in directing the flow of investment, changing the financial system to open up new areas for finance, tempering wage increases with high levels of protection for domestic industry, and expanding demand through immigration and its works programs.²⁵⁶

The origins of Lend Lease reflect the significant role played by Commonwealth programs. In 1949 an Australian government mission travelled worldwide to invite the interest of companies in the Snowy River Scheme and other development works. The labour, materials, capital and expertise required was far beyond the resources and skills of a nation with eight million people. As a result, two Dutch companies set up Civil & Civic Contractors in Australia under the management of GJ Dusseldorp, taking up its first contract with the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority.²⁵⁷ Civil & Civic won several government contracts in the Snowy Mountains Scheme and in nearby Canberra, where the company's first branch was described as 'the training ground of the organisation'.²⁵⁸

The effects of federation itself are still being played out, with differing effects on each capital city. In every city the federal system has required the Commonwealth to construct or rent office space and to erect major public buildings. Commonwealth grants and loans helped to fund other building expansion, notably by universities, although Adelaide was unique in having two universities in the city centre. As Commonwealth powers and responsibilities expanded after the war its city buildings became more prominent. As this power derived in large measure from

253 'A capital city for Western Australia', WA Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Perth, 1990, p 11. Battye Library.

254 B McNeil to S Marsden.

255 There is an extensive literature on this subject. For example, see especially chapters 1 and 2 in CJ Lloyd and PN Troy, *Innovation and reaction: the life and death of the Federal Department of Urban and Regional Development*, George Allen & Unwin, North Sydney 1981.

256 Hartwell and Lane, p 223.

257 Murphy, pp 1-3.

258 Murphy, pp 4-7, 16, 122 (quotation).

the transfer of income tax revenue from the States to the Commonwealth in 1942, buildings constructed for the Australian Taxation Department have particular significance.

The Commonwealth presence reinforced Melbourne's continuing pre-eminence as Australia's financial centre until the 1960s. The Commonwealth public service expanded greatly during World War II but new departments were still located in Sydney or Melbourne because of the lack of accommodation in Canberra. Many places in central Melbourne reflect its 60 years as unofficial federal capital. If not for prime minister Robert Menzies, Melbourne may have remained *de facto* national capital, but his determination to develop Canberra led to the formation of the National Capital Development Commission in 1958 and in the 1950s and 1960s Melbourne was emptied of federal departments.

Sydney was the other capital which gained the most from federation because the removal of trade barriers opened State economies to competition from Sydney firms, and because several Commonwealth functions were located in Sydney, beginning with the Commonwealth Bank in 1912. To gain NSW support for federation in the 1890s, the founders had agreed to place the federal capital no further than 100 miles from Sydney. Hence, from the 1960s, as Canberra grew and the Commonwealth's role was extended, the trend quickened for functions to be placed in Sydney headquarters. In the 1970s, Sydney-based arts administration - including the ABC and the Australia Council - accelerated the concentration of arts activity in Sydney rather than Melbourne.²⁵⁹ Even the day-to-day work of politicians and public servants was often carried out in Sydney and the present prime minister, John Howard, has even chosen to live there rather than in Canberra.

Commonwealth construction and administration may have favoured Sydney or Melbourne but this was less important in terms of overall activity in those cities than in the smaller capitals.²⁶⁰ Canberra is often described as a government town with its office blocks occupied mainly by public agencies but as a proportion of total office space and employment, public administration is nearly as predominant in central Hobart and Darwin. Hobart Council's land use survey in 1967-68 found the main office zone was concentrated around Franklin Square, surrounded by council and government buildings. 'The amount of Commonwealth, State, Local and Semi-Government office buildings shows the importance to Hobart of its function as State Capital, for without these buildings the structure of the Central Business District would resemble little more than a large rural town.'²⁶¹

Commonwealth expenditure was also of greater proportional significance in the post-war development of the smaller capitals, Darwin being the pre-eminent example. Its population started to grow rapidly for the first time in the 1960s in

259 This shift in arts administration and arts activity from Melbourne to Sydney is discussed at greater length in Davidson's introduction to Davidson, ed, *The Sydney-Melbourne book*, pp 6-8.

260 O'Connor and Stimson make the point about the over-representation of public administration and community services in capitals other than Sydney and Melbourne (pp 29, 30) but leave Hobart and Darwin out of the tables comparing employment share by industry sector (p 30).

261 City of Hobart, 1968, pp 14-15.

response to the expansion of mining, improved beef markets and burgeoning public service employment. The main Commonwealth departments concerned with the NT (apart from Defence) were Works and Housing, Northern Australian and Housing and Construction. Departmental ambition was the most important factor contributing to rapid population growth in Darwin.²⁶² Between 1966-74 the close correlation between public sector and population growth was evident in high annual growth rates and the city's population doubled from 23 350 in 1967 to 46 656 in 1974.²⁶³ Departmental rivalry was intensified during the Darwin Reconstruction Commission era (1975-78) and the population was swelled by heavy government expenditure on rebuilding. The public service was further expanded in the mid-1970s by moves towards self-government as the NT public service was created. Commonwealth and Territory administration retained city centre locations and so expansion was reflected in the rebuilding of office accommodation as well as in new public buildings.

After 1978, Darwin benefited more rather than less from Commonwealth expenditure due to a shift in national defence policy. The forward defence policy of stationing forces overseas was abandoned in favour of self-reliance and fostering a favourable security environment in SE Asia and the South Pacific. Northern Australia became “the nation's potential front-line and the Darwin region acquired a new and enduring priority status in defence planning.”²⁶⁴ The practical consequences soon became apparent. A purpose-designed naval facility for patrol boats was opened in 1982; No 75 RAAF Squadron was transferred from Malaysia in 1988; and in the same year Northern Command was established as a new joint-force regional command with headquarters in Darwin.

3.3 State government and the central city

State and local government's role in providing urban infrastructure including ports, railway stations, freeways and streets and underground services was crucial, as also the fact of government 'business' headquarters being concentrated in the city centres. In the smaller States, semi-government authorities such as the South Australian Housing Trust and Tasmania's Hydro-Electric Commission accounted for large percentages of government employment and expenditure and occupied big city premises.²⁶⁵ As developmental authorities they also fostered industrial, residential and metropolitan development, with further important consequences for the city centre.²⁶⁶ The increased presence of State government in the city centres was also an outcome of faster transport and communications. These favoured a tendency to close rural and suburban premises and centralise operations at central headquarters.

²⁶² Bauer, quoted in Greenhalgh, p 41.

²⁶³ Greenhalgh, pp 76, 77.

²⁶⁴ Quoted in *Report of the Committee on Darwin*, p 174

²⁶⁵ Scripps, p 21; Marsden, *Business, charity and sentiment*, pp 259, 260

²⁶⁶ Marsden, *Business, charity and sentiment*, pp 146-149, 225, 239-240, 380 and passim; S Marsden, 'Constructing Playford's city: the South Australian Housing Trust and the transformation of Adelaide, 1936-1966', PhD thesis, Flinders University of SA, Adelaide 1994, pp 214-219, 305-307, 517-524.

In the first post-war period developmental agencies, such as transport and electricity departments erected prominent central buildings in every capital, while in the second phase cultural edifices were prominent, such as the arts complexes built at the edges of city centres in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. The most significant post-war building of all is Utzon's Opera House in Sydney, although its construction was hindered as well as helped by NSW State ministers and public servants.²⁶⁷

A history of the NSW Public Works Department draws attention to the prominence achieved by restoration and heritage planning as a function of the Government Architect's Branch from the 1960s. The formation of an 'Historic Buildings Group' provided a more systematic approach to this work, involving preservation of major buildings such as Parliament House and Hyde Park Barracks.²⁶⁸ Counterparts in SA and Victoria did similar work, also helping to revive traditional building skills such as slate laying and stone carving.

State government influence was not restricted to the buildings and uses within the city centre but also its form and size. State governments were usually the first to build high-rise offices beyond the city centre and to extend the CBD. Evan Walker, Victoria's Minister for Planning, oversaw a strong central city planning initiative and introduced conservation controls in the early 1980s. He initiated the Southbank development through a private developer, Costains and Jennings, the government using its profits from the sale of land to build a new walkway along the river.²⁶⁹ This development followed the earlier construction of the art gallery on the south side of the Yarra and used city controls to expand the city centre across the river. There are strong continuities between Cain's Labor government and Kennet's Liberal government in their attitudes to reinforcing and extending central Melbourne through major redevelopment projects.²⁷⁰

By contrast with the other capitals, for much of the post-war era State government was little concerned with Brisbane's development. This reflected Brisbane's historical role in Queensland, which was never dominant like the other mainland capitals, and its political power was accordingly less. Perhaps partly because this would not threaten its main interests, the government was willing to create one Brisbane metropolitan council and to assign it functions elsewhere carried out by the State.²⁷¹ This attitude towards the city later changed, best exemplified by the extension of the city centre to the south side of the river, following construction of the State's cultural complex and its redevelopment of a 'waste' site in the 1988 Expo.

Darwin assumed the role of capital when the NT gained self-government in 1978. An ensuing building boom 'gave an impetus to development barely seen at any

²⁶⁷ Coltheart and Maddrell, p 71.

²⁶⁸ Coltheart and Maddrell, pp 54-55.

²⁶⁹ Low, p 17.

²⁷⁰ Low, p 17.

²⁷¹ Leach, pp 68-70.

time in the Territory's history.'²⁷² The post-war Darwin Town Area leases were abolished and the city centre was returned to freehold tenure, giving encouragement to private development which included three new hotels and a casino (1983). New public buildings were also needed, the most prominent of them the Supreme Court and the Legislative Assembly, both constructed in the early 1990s.²⁷³ As in the older capitals these buildings are located in a distinct government precinct, thus individually and collectively symbolising the state's administrative and legal authority.²⁷⁴ As in the other States, the new government also adopted measures to revive the city centre, its main strategy being to increase the inner city residential population to provide a 'catchment area' for central businesses. 'The CBD is an area that's got a lot of political leverage, with supporters and members of the Country Liberal Party which governs the territory.'²⁷⁵

3.4 City councils

The roles of city councils also expanded after the war, as demonstrated by the expansion of staff and the extension of council buildings. Notable new buildings included Council House in Perth and the Colonel Light Centre in Pirie Street, Adelaide. Councils were responsible for new carparks, libraries, community centres, gardens, street furniture and road widening. The revived Darwin Council (which includes both city and suburbs) made a deliberate effort to make its presence felt in the city centre with the construction of an expensive cultural centre and city pool. However, Darwin Council, in common with all local governments had limited planning powers. Nor did any city council (except Brisbane) perform a broad range of functions. Their powers were limited both by state legislation and by the tendency for State governments to assume responsibility for important urban functions. This tendency, already evident in the colonial period, accelerated in the post-war period as social and urban requirements became more pressing and States responded by creating a plethora of new agencies. Typical was the finding of planners in 1975 who identified 20 State departments and agencies providing services to the Hobart area, including health, welfare, police, education, environment, works and housing, lands, rivers and water supply and the Hydro-Electric Commission.²⁷⁶

Central city government has 'never sat comfortably in the structure of local government'.²⁷⁷ This fact provided endless opportunities for conflict, especially over development. Stephenson found that there was always 'bad blood' between council and government over central Perth.²⁷⁸ During the 1980s as governments struggled for political control of the city centre, powers were removed from several

²⁷² Wilson, in Welke and Wilson, p xix.

²⁷³ Wilson, p xix.

²⁷⁴ Carment, p 35.

²⁷⁵ P Forest to S Marsden.

²⁷⁶ Leach, pp 17-18, 89.

²⁷⁷ M Lennon, quoted in R Howe, 'Local government and the urban growth debate', in P Troy, ed, *Australian cities*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne 1995, p 186.

²⁷⁸ Stephenson interview, tape 23, p 267.

councils; those in Melbourne and Perth were temporarily replaced by administrators and in Sydney by a Central Sydney Planning Committee. Physical boundaries were also changed. Adelaide kept to its original boundaries of 1837 but Melbourne's boundaries were moved and those of Sydney have been shifted four times since 1948, in order to include or exclude inner suburbs on the east, south and west.²⁷⁹ 'Sydney has varied in size as state governments have attached or detached residential areas to ensure that the majority group in the city council reflects the politics of the party in power.'²⁸⁰ Sydney was reduced to its 'core' in 1989, the closest the council has come to being completely identified with a CBD.²⁸¹

Councils in Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney were ineffective in preventing the demolition of historical buildings, the over-supply of offices and the loss of retailing and population, despite having large planning departments, in Brisbane and Hobart, even larger than State planning departments.²⁸² Yet councils did make their cities more urbane, with some successful heritage preservation and rehabilitation and the creation of guides and markers, new street furniture and tree planting, malls, markets and public entertainment.

3.5 Conflict and protest

City streets and squares are theatres of protest and confrontation. The biggest demonstrations were held in 1970 to protest Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War. The most sustained history of protest and reaction was played out in Brisbane's public spaces in conflicts engendered and exacerbated by conservative Labor and National Party State governments. In 1948 when railwaymen went on strike the police violently broke up a demonstration against an Act designed to prevent strikes; the next day, 10 000 people demonstrated in King George Square.²⁸³ A state of emergency was declared during protests against the visit of the South African Springbok Rugby Team in 1971; a 'Right to March' movement demonstrated between 1977 and 1979; and in 1985 there were clashes in the streets during the confrontation between Queensland's government and power unions.

Conflict between competing city interests also spilled over into the streets. 'More than at any other time in the city's history planning was now a controversial and public matter'.²⁸⁴ Stannage's comment about planning in Perth from the mid-1960s applies equally to the other capitals. Metropolitan plans which considered inner-city areas as ripe for redevelopment engendered growing resistance from inner city residents, local businesses and conservationists who opposed the loss of

279 P Ashton, *The Accidental city: planning Sydney since 1788*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney 1993, p 11; S Fitzgerald, *Sydney 1842-1992*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney 1992, p 231.

280 I McPhail, 'Local government', P Troy, ed, *Federal power in Australia's cities*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney 1978, p 106.

281 Ashton *The accidental city*

282 Howe, in Troy, *Australian cities*, p 187.

283 Murphy, Joyce and Cribb, pp 454-455.

284 Stannage, p 3.

old buildings and the use of river valleys as cheap sites for freeway routes.²⁸⁵ In the 1970s, protest spread to the business heartland. In Melbourne Collins Street became a battleground between financiers, mining magnates and ‘real estate sharks’ and the Builder’s Labourers’ Union and the National Trust.²⁸⁶ The Collins Street Defence Movement was formed in 1976, ‘too late to be effective’.²⁸⁷ But by 1980 an ‘uneasy truce’ prevailed, with the ‘Chicago’ end of Collins Street half-finished and the ‘Paris’ end half-wrecked. ‘This is no small matter for Melbournians. For if Melbourne has either a soul or a destiny it is somehow bound up with Collins Street.’²⁸⁸

Residence as a form of conflict also strongly influenced the character of the city centres. The residential presence was both denied and affirmed by councils, governments and commercial interests. Fitzgerald writes that conflict within Sydney City Council between residential and commercial interests has been a constant theme in Sydney’s twentieth century history. The conflict in Woolloomooloo has also meant that, after the 1970s, rather than shifting east into Woolloomooloo, commercial tower-builders turned towards the west.²⁸⁹ Similar conflict erupted in the other cities with important consequences for city heritage. Overall, heritage activists and other urban protest groups had much less effect in the business cores of the cities than in ‘frame’ districts. As McLoughlin concluded in Melbourne’s case, ‘with no disrespect to such movements...they have been no match for industrial, property and finance capital and the growing power of the corporate state and its professional bureaucracies in deciding the patterns of metropolitan change,’ and least influential in the city centre.²⁹⁰

4. City life

4.1 City people

Cities are shaped by the interaction between economic, political and demographic processes. Demographic processes which have most affected city centres are: Australia’s total population increase; its concentration in the capital cities; and immigration. Between 1947 and the early 1970s Australian mothers and federal government immigration schemes boosted growth at unprecedented rates, with the ‘baby boom’ and overseas immigrants contributing similar shares to the growth in capital city populations.²⁹¹ The biggest increase through immigration occurred between 1949 and 1959 with 2 115 000 arrivals.²⁹²

²⁸⁵ For example, see Dingle and Rasmussen’s discussion of the reaction to the Melbourne master plan and its implementation, in *Vital connections*, pp 246-257.

²⁸⁶ Dunstan, in G Davison, pp 38-39.

²⁸⁷ Lewis, p 139.

²⁸⁸ D Dunstan, in G Davison, ed, *Melbourne on foot*, pp 38-39.

²⁸⁹ Paul Ashton to S Marsden

²⁹⁰ McLoughlin, pp 234, 235 (quotation), 240.

²⁹¹ Forster, p 17. Immigration contributed 48 per cent to 56 per cent of the population increase in all the capitals except Brisbane and Hobart (33 per cent). Natural increase accounted for 33 per cent (Adelaide) to 46 per cent (Sydney).

²⁹² Hartwell and Lane, p 216.

The five largest cities took over a century to reach a total of four million by 1947; 24 years later that total had almost doubled. By 1971 'Sydney and Melbourne were massive, sprawling metropolises, each with over 2.5 million inhabitants, and the populations of Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide all exceeded 700 000.' Metropolitan primacy had also grown. As a long-term trend which accelerated between the 1940s and the 1960s, population growth was concentrated in the capital cities, where 63 per cent of Australians lived by 1995, compared with 54 per cent in 1947.²⁹³ That average conceals marked differences between the cities. Melbourne, Perth, and Adelaide housed between 65 per cent and 79 per cent of their State populations by 1961 while Hobart, Brisbane and Sydney held between 40 per cent and 58 per cent. After that date as overseas immigration slowed the proportions in every capital rose only slightly, held level or slightly declined.²⁹⁴

Immigration was of an unprecedented scale and diversity as the government, seeking high numbers, extended assistance to non-British peoples. This produced three remarkable demographic changes: rapid rises in total population, in ethnic diversity and in the proportion of immigrants in the population overall. All three effects were most marked in the capital cities as most immigrants were attracted to them by manufacturing and service jobs and new suburban housing.

From the early 1970s, the most important national reshaping process has been the 'population turnaround'. The growth rate of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane declined relative to smaller cities in their own States, and there was also movement from Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney to the western and northern capitals. Retirement migration, tourism and the search for alternative lifestyles generated rapid growth in coastal districts. The scale of interstate migration to the Brisbane region and Perth, has made them 'serious alternatives to Sydney and Melbourne as locations for households and firms'.²⁹⁵ It has also underpinned the economic and cultural diversification in the Brisbane and Perth centres.

4.2 *Immigrants*

Post-war immigration has had a profound impact on the character and development of the city centres.²⁹⁶ Australia's cities were created by immigrants but by 1947 most of the population was Australian-born and British in origin. This was evident in the sedate and homogeneous character of the city centres - except for Darwin where Chinese and Greek families were a strong presence. The enlivening and enrichment of all of the city centres by European and Asian immigrants since then is generally acknowledged as a major theme.

Other consequences of the immigration schemes were even more significant. The scale of immigration hugely increased the size of the capital cities, contributing to

²⁹³ The largest percentage change was in SA where Adelaide's share of the State population grew from 59 per cent to 72 per cent; Melbourne's share was the same. Forster, p 15.

²⁹⁴ JCR Camm and J McQuilton, eds, *Australians: a historical atlas*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon, NSW 1987, p 90.

²⁹⁵ Lepani et al, pp 46, 47.

²⁹⁶ For both specific and general observations on post-war immigration its implications for Australian cities see also IH Burnley, ed, *Urbanization in Australia: the post-war experience*, Cambridge University Press, London 1974, eg pp 56-57 and 99.

their metropolitanisation, and there were more specific effects, reflecting migrants' preferences for particular cities. Most overseas immigrants went to Melbourne and Sydney, which also attracted most European refugees, then, from the 1950s, southern Europeans, and from the 1970s, Asians. Asian migration was concentrated in Sydney, accounting for nearly 45 per cent of Australia's Asian intake between 1976 and 1990. British migrants were more widely distributed with Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth absorbing similar shares before 1986 and Perth and Sydney receiving the highest shares after that.²⁹⁷ Proportionately, Adelaide and Perth received a predominance of British immigrants.

There were also distinct geographical patterns of ethnic difference, with particular significance for inner city life. British and other northern and eastern Europeans chose new housing in outer suburbs. Southern Europeans went to old houses in the inner city, where they developed enclaves with their own shops, churches and clubs, which have remained although most of the migrants themselves have moved to new suburban homes. Burnley has explored in some detail the impact of residents on inner Sydney and Melbourne.²⁹⁸ In 1966 there were nearly equal numbers of migrants (mainly Italians) as Australian-born residents in the northern section of central Perth, compared to a ratio of 1:3 for the metropolitan area. 'This concentration of migrants, mostly southern Europeans, in the inner city is a striking feature of all the Australian capital cities, and has generally kept the central areas alive as cities.'²⁹⁹ Southern Europeans were succeeded by the next wave of non-British immigrants. In Perth, as in the other cities, immigrants speaking languages other than English are still concentrated near the city centre.³⁰⁰

In sum, 'the normal settlement patterns for non-British migrants follow three stages: firstly, settlement in inner-city areas or near migrant hostels; secondly, movement outwards along public transport routes; and thirdly, dispersal into more middle-class areas particularly for the younger generation.'³⁰¹ Fourthly, some members of that generation have returned, with other young, middle-class Australians, to inner-city living. Each succeeding group of migrants left some residents in the city, together with the places that they built. There is a built heritage of the inner city which expresses its enduring role as a place of first residence for new immigrants, and a place of lasting association for many of them.

Another consequence of post-war migration lay in the roles played by particular groups and individuals. 'The Italians brought concrete, the Jews commerce, the Yugoslavians brought carpentry, the Poles bricklaying. Everybody brought in something.'³⁰² Some individuals had far-reaching impact on the architecture,

²⁹⁷ O'Connor and Stimson, pp 22-23.

²⁹⁸ For example, see Burnley's chapter, 'Immigration: the postwar transformation of Sydney and Melbourne', in Davidson.

²⁹⁹ Seddon, *Sense of place*, p 325.

³⁰⁰ *Western Australian Year Book '95*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, WA Office, Perth 1995 (Profile of Perth) p 316.

³⁰¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Year Book Australia 1995*, no 77, ABS, Canberra 1994, p 136.

³⁰² P Joss, in Ostrow, p 288.

economies, politics and cultural activities of their adopted cities. The influence of architects and engineers is highly visible. Australia's most-renowned architect, Harry Seidler, came from Vienna via North America in 1948. His city centre monuments are well-known and extensively documented.³⁰³ Alexander Wargon, who was born in Poland and educated in Israel and at Harvard University, practised as a design engineer with consulting firms in Australia from 1951-61. In the 1960s he formed the firm Wargon Chapman Partners which has since designed 4000 projects, including in central Sydney the American Express building, Centrepont tower and several hotels, Queen Victoria car park and the Sydney Harbour tunnel.³⁰⁴

Post-war immigrants played an important part in developing businesses which catered for the high demand for property development, creating companies like Westfield, Stockland Trust, Transfield, Lend Lease and Stokes Developments. Stockland Trust (originally Stocks and Holdings) was started by Ervin Graf, who arrived in 1950, worked as an industrial architect, then in business constructing mass housing and in 1957 diversified into commercial developments in central Sydney. In the 1970s Graf's company constructed the Park Regis, and inner-city townhouses and luxury apartments, then diversified further into multi-storey office blocks and shopping centres and extended operations to Queensland.³⁰⁵

The role of Gerardus (Dick) Dusseldorp in Lend Lease has been referred to. The 'wooing and warring' of Bruno and Rino Grollo (sons of an Italian immigrant), Viennese immigrant Ted Lustig and his Israeli son-in-law Max Moar, 'had an enormous impact on property development in Australia, leading to the remoulding of Melbourne's financial centre'.³⁰⁶ In the 1970s and 1980s the Lustig and Moar Corporation and the Grollo Group developed joint holdings such as the Hyatt Hotel in Collins Street, and as rivals 'set about developing what they believed to be their own end of town'.³⁰⁷ Most contested and most renowned was Bruno Grollo's \$350 million Rialto complex in the west end of Melbourne. Developers in Perth were mostly Australian-born or English migrants. Alan Bond, who arrived from England in 1950, 'made and lost his first money in the property industry'. After first profiting from subdivision, he moved into construction, including the 13 storey Stock Exchange building in 1968.³⁰⁸

From the 1980s Asian investment in Australian capital city property expanded dramatically. Many investors became permanent residents to by-pass investment regulations, or else, like the Tan family of the Malaysian company Ipoh Garden Berhad, sent their children to run their business interests. Ostrow also observed, 'it is common for Asian family members, particularly transglobal Chinese, to diversify

303 For example, see Frampton and Drew. Their selected bibliography is four pages long.

304 Alexander Wargon, Curriculum vitae, Institution of Engineers Oral history project, NSW, 1996 (copy provided by R Block, Oral History Program, State Library of NSW).

305 Hartwell and Lane, pp 239-240.

306 Ostrow, p 40.

307 Ostrow, p 41.

308 Hartwell and Lane, pp 244, 245.

throughout many Western outposts, thus spreading their risks in a political and financial sense'. As in other immigrant cities such as New York, ethnic Chinese immigrants and investors from South-East Asia renewed historical Chinatowns in Melbourne and Sydney. Melbourne's Chinatown, between Swanston and Russell Streets, which had almost disappeared by the 1930s, was revived by Chinese immigrants. In the late 1970s the council began to publicise the area and erected colourful arches spanning Little Bourke Street.³⁰⁹ In a city dominated by high-rise offices Chinatown provides welcome variety, while its enduring institutions - such as the Sze-Yap building - tell of a unique aspect of the city's history.³¹⁰ In Sydney, partly in response to the redevelopment of nearby Darling Harbour, Chinatown grew in extent and popularity from the 1980s. Tiger Balm heiress and multi-national businesswoman Sally Aw Sian was one of the largest holders of property in Chinatown, including the Dixon House commercial complex and the Sing Tao building.³¹¹

4.3 *Working life and unemployment*

Much attention has been paid in Australian histories to industrialisation, with emphasis on the structural change evident from the 1930s as manufacturing industry accounted for rising proportions of the workforce relative to primary production and mining. Attention has also been drawn to a further marked change in the distribution of employment since the 1940s, with the proportion in manufacturing remaining constant at 26 per cent while the proportion in tertiary, or service industries, rose from 46 per cent in 1949 to 64 per cent in 1970. Twenty years later the proportion in manufacturing as a percentage of the workforce had declined to 16 per cent and the percentage in the tertiary sector had risen to 77 per cent.³¹² The rise was mirrored in the vertical and horizontal expansion of the post-war city centres

Australian city centres have traditionally employed a high proportion of the workforce. At the beginning of the twentieth century tertiary activities accounted for more than 50 per cent, and as Australia was already highly urbanised much of that employment was located in the capital city centres. Profound changes in the architecture, technologies and social relations of the workplace should not blind the urban historian to this equally significant continuity. The city workforce was largest in Sydney, which accounted for a third of all of the nation's finance, property and business service jobs by the 1980s. Melbourne and Sydney retained shares of secondary and tertiary employment far in excess of their share of the nation's population, although their shares fell slightly after 1986.³¹³ The rise in workers, from a smaller base, seemed more dramatic in the other capitals. The number of workers in central Perth rose from 72 400 in 1961 to 111 300 in 1991, although this represented a decline in the percentage of the whole metropolitan

³⁰⁹ A Blake, in Davison, ed, *Melbourne on foot*, p 61.

³¹⁰ Blake, in Davison, ed, *Melbourne on foot*, pp 53 (quotation), 59.

³¹¹ Ostrow, p 266, 268.

³¹² Hartwell and Lane, pp 219, 294.

³¹³ O'Connor and Stimson, p 46.

workforce (from 44 per cent to 20 per cent).³¹⁴ Wilbur Smith predicted with some accuracy a very similar rise in Brisbane, and a similar decline in the centre's percentage of metropolitan employment overall, from 39 per cent in 1960 to 27 per cent by 1981.³¹⁵ The rise in employment in the city centres encompassed an increasing specialisation in office and service jobs and a decline in sales and blue collar jobs as manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing dispersed to the suburbs.

The proportion of female workers has traditionally been highest in the tertiary sector but until the 1960s most married women did not (and, in the case of the public service, could not) take up paid employment. While women joined the labour force at a steadily increasing rate through the 1970s and 1980s, the labour market remained segmented by gender and most women took up routine, part-time and casual jobs in the expanding tertiary sector.³¹⁶ Hence, central business districts became dominated numerically by female workers, at least until the late 1980s when those same routine jobs were abolished with the widespread use of computer networks and financial restructuring. The female character of much of the working population of the post-war city is an aspect of the city's heritage which warrants investigation.

Since the 1970s some women have instead been contracted by corporations to work outside the city centre on personal computers, linked up to central offices by data networks, as tele-workers (working from a remote location outside the city) or tele-commuters (from suburban or fringe central sites). Electronic networks of self-employed professional contractors and researchers have also emerged, which have been described (somewhat prematurely) as 'virtual cities'. By 1992 more than two million people, one quarter of the total Australian workforce, carried out some hours of work at home. As yet, however, tele-commuting and tele-working have not brought large population shifts from the cities nor markedly changed the organisation of work.³¹⁷ In the late 1980s, two new Commonwealth buildings alone were designed to house a total of 10 500 staff: 7500 in the Melbourne office on a large site bounded by Lonsdale, Spring, Exhibition and Little Lonsdale Streets, and another 3000 in the Sydney office on Pitt and Hay Streets.³¹⁸

What is clear is that 'employment opportunities in the centre are narrower than they have ever been and are likely to become even narrower as the centre becomes more specialised'.³¹⁹ The adoption of information technology with the reduced reliance on central place also increases specialisation by reducing the need for retailers, householders and firms to locate or even visit the centre. Innovations in information technology have also been used to develop changes in the organisation of offices remaining in the city. One result has been the reduction of office space per person, even for senior staff who now do their own typing (word

³¹⁴ Alexander and May, table 1.

³¹⁵ Wilbur Smith and Associates, p 128 (table 6-5).

³¹⁶ Lepani et al, p 95.

³¹⁷ Lepani et al, pp 103-104.

³¹⁸ Pegrum, pp 82, 83.

³¹⁹ P Troy, 'Social aspects of urban consolidation', in *ICOMOS Conference papers*, Melbourne 1996, p 3

processing) and record-keeping. This has reversed a trend towards more generous space per worker evident in the design of earlier post-war office buildings.³²⁰

Since the 1970s as unskilled jobs have disappeared with restructuring and economic recession the unemployment rate amongst teenagers and recently arrived migrants has been high. The Vietnamese in particular have experienced severe unemployment. Most unemployment has been in suburban and regional settings but with bad consequences for many city workers: job losses in shops and offices, constant drudgery in family restaurants, extra stress for welfare workers and longer hours and less funding for public servants. The metropolitan unemployed are also at their most visible here, gathering in the city to collect pensions, to protest and to seek pleasure.

4.4 Cultural sites, arts, crafts and sciences

City centres are cultural sites of great significance and embody the values and activities of modern urban culture. As a colonial and peripheral society Australia's urban culture has been dominated by the 'metropolitan' cultures of London, New York and Los Angeles. Within Australia the metropolitan cultures of Sydney and Melbourne have predominated with Sydney exerting increasing influence in line with its growing size and financial dominance.

Cultural sites within the city centre include libraries and museums; sites with less tangible but equally powerful cultural associations, and rooms housing cultural and scientific activities carried out privately or collectively. City centres are also performance spaces as buskers and bands entertain crowds and arts festivals use city gardens in open-air plays and concerts. Collective cultural activities have always been a significant function. These multiplied from the late 1960s with the growth of a 'parallel education system' in voluntary associations, adult education, museums, galleries and public funding for the arts, sciences and heritage.³²¹ The biggest public expenditures were on capital works. Sydney Opera House, Adelaide Festival Theatre and Perth Concert Hall were all opened in 1973. New libraries, archives, museums, galleries and cultural centres or major extensions were built in Adelaide, Perth, Hobart and Sydney, and new cultural complexes were developed just outside the traditional city centre in Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth.

4.5 City pleasures

Each city centre was provided during the high-Victorian period with a range of places, including hotels, botanic gardens and libraries which catered for popular, physical and cultural pleasures. Those pleasures have persisted unchanged since colonial times. The social use of city spaces is as important a function as the activities carried out in its buildings. The city centre is a place for social and cultural exchange; for eating, sport, celebrations, entertainment, festivals and pageants; it is a social place and a stage for events large and small. Even in sedate Adelaide, the

³²⁰ P Troy to S Marsden, and P Troy, 'Introduction', in Troy, *Technological change and the city*, p 7.

³²¹ See D Horne, S Marsden and A Painter, comps, *A hidden Australian cultural resource - the parallel education system*, National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University, Victoria, 1993.

Australian tour by the Beatles in 1964 'drew crowds to the streets in numbers not experienced since the Royal Tour of 1954'.³²²

Meetings, protests and the opportunities for entertainment, adventure and vice have proliferated exceedingly. Lewis introduces the post-war history of central Melbourne by evoking its most dramatic events: mass protests when American president Johnson visited in 1966; the funeral of prime minister Harold Holt at St Paul's Cathedral in 1967, and the Vietnam moratoria organised by Jim Cairns in 1970 when more than 70 000 people marched through the city.³²³

An *Australian Quarterly* description of central Adelaide in 1960: 'the dead Sundays, six o'clock closing time on weekdays...and the noticeable shortage of good hotels, restaurants and night clubs',³²⁴ applied to all of the city centres of the time. The Protestant ascendancy, particularly in the smaller capitals, also succeeded in banning Sunday entertainments and off-course betting, until the broad trend towards a secular society and a liberalising of public opinion brought legislative changes in the late 1960s and early 1970s.³²⁵ NSW extended hotel trading to 10 o'clock in 1955 and SA was the last State to allow bars to open after six in 1967. Liquor licences were also changed to allow restaurants to serve alcohol and 'bring-your-own'. Gambling in hotels, clubs and casinos was later made legitimate and state-funded casinos were built in every capital.

Since the 1960s higher disposable incomes and greater leisure time for Australians generally, and larger metropolitan populations, translated into bigger profits for the entertainment and tourism industries in every capital city. Except for office and finance, no other sector has shown such physical expansion and alteration of existing places as this, especially in central Sydney and Melbourne.

There was also a phase of 'Remembering pedestrians'.³²⁶ As car traffic deterred shoppers, councils began to improve pedestrian access in ways long advocated by planners such as Gordon Stephenson and Paul Ritter in WA. In Perth the council created the Hay Street Mall in 1970; Forrest Place was closed to vehicles in 1979 and the Central Railway station forecourt was bridged. Today, troops of people pass along the walkways and cross the station to the cultural centre and Northbridge on the far side of the railway. In the same decade central shopping streets were closed to cars in Adelaide (Rundle Mall), Sydney (Martin Place), Melbourne (Bourke Street Mall) and Darwin (Smith Street Mall).

The impact of those social and legislative changes was immense. People thronged the streets and life returned to the cities at weekends and at night. New cafes and hotels were built but more commonly existing buildings were altered, such as Adelaide's Railway Station, partly converted to a casino. Many hotels resumed the wider entertainment role they had played in the nineteenth century, although there were fewer of them. After Australia's first regular television service

322 Painter, in O'Neil et al, p 312.

323 Lewis, p 127.

324 Quoted in A Painter, 'Entertainment: the changing scene', in O'Neil et al, p 314.

325 D Hilliard, 'Religion in Playford's SA', in O'Neil et al, pp 269, 271-272.

326 Cole, p 298.

was launched in 1956 the numbers of cinemas dwindled rapidly but 30 years later they made a come-back. Cinemas are less glamorous than the first generation of 'picture theatres' but more numerous. In Sydney the block bounded by Liverpool, Kent, George and Bathurst Streets contains more than 20 cinemas. 'Within this tiny space perhaps the most hyperbolic compression of space, time and possible meanings occurs ...'.³²⁷

There are also pleasures of more recent fabrication: amusement arcades, night clubs, entertainment complexes and Hobart's Salamanca Place and Adelaide's Rundle Street East where historical sites accommodate shops, markets and cafes. Some commentators distinguish between the class of pleasures on offer in the city centres, most evident in central Sydney and Melbourne, which are increasingly devoted to tourism and mass entertainment, while theatre, serious bookshops, and art galleries have 'fled, to everywhere but the central city'.³²⁸ 'Walking the Block', fashionable in the 1880s, has returned to Melbourne but in other respects, city pleasures are now less public. Public space is becoming more privatised due to construction of interior arcades, overhead walkways and security cameras. New spaces such as Melbourne's Southbank draw crowds but are only semi-public as they are expensive and patrolled by security guards.³²⁹ The space-demands of the new towers also ensured that they obliterated a wider variety of structures and spaces with a greater range of uses, and overshadowed outdoor places.

4.6 *Living in the city*

Traditionally the city centre has provided for people who can find no home elsewhere, if only a park bench. City living encompasses a vast and shifting population of old drunks and homeless teenagers, prostitutes, patients and students, tourists in hotel towers and visiting tribespeople in city parks: Victoria Square in Adelaide and Raintree Park in Darwin are used by Aboriginal people as important meeting places, although there are conflicting reactions to their presence. Many single people are drawn to city life. In central Melbourne in the early 1970s the percentage of single person households was 29 per cent compared to 10 per cent in the 'outer area'.³³⁰

There are also permanent city residents, larger than average proportions of whom are single elderly women and recent migrants. When maps are prepared of the city centres, 'the population density map is the employment density map turned inside out'. Employment density follows the highest land values in the main retail and office areas in the 'core' of the city while the highest residential density is in the 'frame', to the north, east and west in central Perth.³³¹ Other cities demonstrate similar patterns.

The surviving city centre community is a one based on varied residence - old terraces and new apartment blocks, hostels, hospitals and flats, mansions hived into

³²⁷ Meagher, p 380.

³²⁸ Lewis, p 129. A similar observation was made by G Davison, to S Marsden.

³²⁹ A Brown-May to S Marsden, 1996.

³³⁰ 'Melbourne's inner area', MMBW report, p 74.

³³¹ G Seddon, *Sense of place*, University of WA Press, Nedlands, 1972, p 235.

single-room lets, and cheap hotels - served by delicatessens, corner pubs and the elaborate churches and schools built for once-large local populations. Some frame districts are also important relics of the pre-modernist centre, which was until the 1960s low-scale and heterogeneous. This mixture of uses was dismissed by early post-war planners as 'slums', or as obsolete land use, ripe for 'redevelopment'. Much was replaced and the following generation of planners and officials included those who proposed revival of these communities and implemented planning and heritage controls. As a result, residence as a form of conflict between city dwellers, planners and developers has been an important theme since the war in old residential districts like the Rocks and Woolloomooloo (Sydney), Wapping (Hobart), and the South East and South West corners in Adelaide and North Adelaide.

Low-cost accommodation for people who need or serve the centre remains an important function of the frame district, although threatened by other central functions. Alexander illustrates land use change in central Perth in 1953 and 1968 by maps which show, even in this short period, 'core' functions such as retailing and offices greatly expanded in extent, although offices concentrated on and near St Georges Terrace. By contrast, residential use was much reduced and the 'frame' had been invaded by other uses. In Hobart the central concentration of office and public buildings had also intensified by the 1950s but the expansion of the business core into adjacent areas provided 'a mixed pattern of functions which is usually identified as transitional land use'.³³²

This process of 'transition' was encouraged by State public housing programs until the 1970s, when, after encountering widening opposition to their demolition and high-rise policies housing authorities in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide revisited the inner city in a more tactful manner by constructing 'in-fill' housing and restoring earlier houses. These tended to be inner-city rather than city centre sites, such as the Emerald Hill (Melbourne) and Glebe (Sydney) projects inspired by the Commonwealth Department of Urban and Regional Development. But in Adelaide the South Australian Housing Trust acted on the Dunstan government's policy of 'getting population back into the city square mile', by building medium-density housing and, in the face of gentrification, retaining boarding houses and cottages for people on low incomes.³³³

By contrast, since the 1970s the main consequence of city council efforts to promote the return of residents has been to raise the proportion of high-income occupants. This residential increase has been most notable in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. Typically, Sydney Council's strategic plan of 1971 aimed to 'arrest and reverse the decline in the city's residential population', noting that up to 900 people were moving away every year and that residential space continued to decline as expressways and other uses encroached. However, high land costs and scarcity of space would result in high density residential development and high-

³³² Solomon, *Urbanisation*, p 223.

³³³ Marsden, *Business, charity and sentiment*, pp 347, 368, 371, 372 (photo), 378, 392 (quotation).

income residents.³³⁴ Financial inducements such as bonus floor space for residential buildings has since then fostered a boom in inner-city apartments. The return of city residents to new and 'recycled' buildings is often-noted in the media, but not their fewer numbers compared to earlier residential populations, nor the contrast between the street life of those times and today's highly-privatised lives.

Conclusion

Despite intense pressures from state and capital to redefine city centres in terms of a single use - office space - they retain, and should retain, a complex of uses and an overlapping set of economic, political and cultural spaces. The concept of overlapping spatial arrangements pulls together many of the themes listed separately above and links the centre's history to its heritage. Not listed because they are all-encompassing are those other major themes of the city centre: spatial and historical change in central city function, within a context of local, national and global political-economic restructuring.³³⁵

The diversity of use in city centres overall does not obscure their internal division into distinct precincts: every suburban shopper knows to head for Rundle Mall in Adelaide or Queen Street Mall in Brisbane. One important aspect of central areas is the physical structures, land uses and cultural activities carried over from earlier times. Residential occupation of 'CBDs' is a good example. This aspect of modern city centres is important not simply to historians but has been demonstrated by popular choice and government and business response to be of real significance. Such historical aspects of urban morphology are termed path dependency by economic historians.³³⁶

Cities are not simply agglomerations of concrete and bitumen. They are human communities. Community may be defined as the space in which the relationship between the public and the private is negotiated. Public spaces are the domain where these relations are negotiated. Defining community as space brings the concept into direct relationship with contemporary research into urban spatial arrangements.³³⁷ Community as public space will always be contested as well as celebrated in the city centres.

Maybe the inner city has always been under pressure, always breaking down, crystallising out and reforming...The positive side of this is the way people move in and rebuild - rooms, communities, ideas.³³⁸

³³⁴ GP Webber, ed, *The design of Sydney*, Law Book Co, Sydney, 1988, p 10.

³³⁵ F Stilwell to S Marsden.

³³⁶ Dingle, in Troy, *Australian cities*, p 20

³³⁷ Freeman Wyllie, URP seminar, ANU 13 May 1996.

³³⁸ B Brooks, 'Maps', in Modjeska, p 33.

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Abbreviations

ACC Corporation of the City of Adelaide
 AGPS Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra
 AHC Australian Heritage Commission, Canberra
 AIUS Australian Institute of Urban Studies
 ANU Australian National University, Canberra
 BCC Brisbane City Council
 BLWA JS Battye Library of WA History, State Library, Perth
 CUP Cambridge University Press
 DAS Dept of Administrative Services, Canberra
 Dept Department
 DFAT Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra
 MUP Melbourne University Press
 NARU North Australia Research Unit, Australian National University, Darwin
 NT National Trust
 NTU Northern Territory University, Darwin
 QUT Queensland University of Technology
 RAIA Royal Australian Institute of Architects
 RAPI Royal Australian Planning Institute
 SAGP South Australian Government Printer (also, Printing Division)
 SLNSW State Library of NSW, Sydney
 URP Urban Research Program, Research School of Social Sciences ANU
 UQP University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Brisbane
 UTS University of Technology, Sydney
 UWA University of Western Australia, Nedlands, Perth

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